DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 482 792 FL 801 610

AUTHOR	Silliman, Anna, Ed.
TITLE	Hands-On English: A Periodical for Teachers and Tutors of Adult English as a Second Language, 2003.
INSTITUTION	Hands-on English, Crete, NE.
ISSN	ISSN-1056-2680
PUB DATE	2003-00-00
NOTE	62p.; Published six times per year. This document only includes the first 3 issues of Volume 13. For Volume 12, see ED 476 248.
AVAILABLE FROM	Hands-On English, P.O. Box 256, Crete, NE 6833. Tel: 800-ESL-HAND (Toll Free); Fax: 402-826-3997; Web site: http://www.handsonenglish.com.
PUB TYPE	Collected Works - Serials (022)
JOURNAL CIT	Hands-On English; v13 n1-3 May/Jun-Sept-Oct 2003
EDRS PRICE	EDRS Price MF01/PC03 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Adult Education; Class Activities; Educational Games; Elementary Secondary Education; *English (Second Language); *Grammar; Higher Education; *Interpersonal Competence; Second Language Instruction; *Speech Skills
IDENTIFIERS	*Conversation

ABSTRACT

These three issues contain educational activities and articles on the following topics: education for the future; learning about learning; readers' responses to requests for suggested article and activity topics; tools and techniques (revisiting the one-question interview, learning students' names, and getting to know one another); multi-level dictation (seasonal allergies, traffic hazards, and telemarketing calls); reading activities (getting new glasses and a call to the doctor's office); dictionary practice; multi-level crossword puzzle; grammar (using reported speech, combining sentences, and modals of ability); and conversation (controversy cards for debate, "I've had enough of this cough for 3 days," and "I couldn't come to class because I had to go to the INS); (Adjunct ERIC Clearinghouse for ESL Literacy Education.) (SM)

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Volume 13, Number 1, May/June 2003
Volume 13, Number 2, July/August 2003
Volume 13, Number 3, September/October 2003

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Volume 13, Number 1 May/June 2003

Hands-on English

A periodical for teachers and tutors of adult English as a second language

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Education is for the future

As you know, many U.S. states are experiencing budget shortfalls and this will likely mean cuts to programs (surprise!) like adult ESL that are perceived as less vital. This problem comes up every few years, like a recurring virus.

Apparently where military matters are concerned Americans are willing to bear the cost to do what needs to be done, but the general public has always been less willing to shell out cash for education. Yet the costs are vastly different.

For most of us, once you start talking about millions, billions, trillions and gazillions it all sounds the same. We can't actually visualize what these numbers mean. Perhaps what is needed is for educators (that's you) to try to clarify to fellow citizens how little it would cost, relatively speaking, to have a great education system. Pie charts, anyone?

I can't help being optimistic that eventually priorities will change. In the meantime, we'll have to hang on to the life preservers, keep waving the pie charts, and continue doing the vital work of preparing people for the future.

In this issue

This issue is packed with useful activities! Your students may interested in talking about allergies, that perennial problem that you hear about a lot this time of year, so we've prepared one of our popular multi-level dictations on this topic (p. 6).

Another health matter that rarely gets mentioned in ESL texts is eye-checkups. We're bringing you a reading passage and a multi-level crossword puzzle about getting new glasses and going to the optometrist (p.9). We hope you'll have fun with this one.

On page 14 you'll find a grammar lesson on *couldn't/wasn't able to* that we hope will give your students some practice in explaining themselves! After learning the forms by working through the examples, your students can try this out immediately with a conversation activity on the next page.

In addition to bringing you materials you can use *now*, we also try to show you ideas that you can apply to any of your own lessons. Two good techniques are in this issue—the 'one-question interview' technique that we've described before (p.4) and how to create lessons from your students' own stories (p. 16). With these tools under your belt, you'll go a long, long way toward effective teaching and memorable learning.

Not really gone. . .

Our "Dear Abbie" is taking a break for this issue, but she's still here in spirit. If we get questions from our readers that she can address, we'll ask for her assistance again. (That's a hint, to send in your questions!)

And speaking of questions, if you have some time please do fill out our Reader Survey on p. 17 of this issue. We're eager to hear from you and get your suggestions for future issues. Thank you so much!

Happy teaching!

—the Editor.

Hands-on English
Volume 13, Number 1
May/June 2003

Hands-on English (ISSN 1056-2680) is published six times a year (Jan./Feb., March/April, May/June, July/Aug., Sept./Oct., Nov./Dec) by Hands-on English, P.O. Box 256, Crete, Nebraska 68333 USA.
Printing by *The Printer* in Lincoln, NE.

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Subscription rates: $29 for individual subscribers, $42 (multi-user rate) for libraries or institutions. Postage: Included in U.S. orders. Canada and Mexico add $4; other countries add $10. Single copies of back issues are $7 ea.

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About the publication

We're in our second decade! *Hands-on English* has been helping teachers and tutors with practical teaching ideas since 1991. The editor is a former ESL teacher who has taught ESL to adults in many different settings, and is familiar with the fun and the challenges involved.

The articles and ideas in HOE come from experienced teachers and tutors, including our readers. If you have a lesson or teaching suggestion you would like to share, we welcome your input!

Who reads H.O.E.?

Our subscribers work with ESL students in a wide range of programs, including: Refugee programs, Literacy programs, Community colleges, Colleges and universities, Correctional facilities, Resource centers, **Adult Education programs**, Volunteer tutoring, Intensive ESL programs, Teacher training programs, Religious organizations, Worker's unions, Community Education programs, Secondary schools, Workplace education, Language institutes, Libraries . . .and more!

What do our readers have in common? They are dedicated, they are working under sometimes difficult conditions, and they are looking for practical, adult level materials that will help their students learn English.

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Hands-on English awards a few small grants (of up to $200 each) annually for practical, innovative classroom projects. Applications are due each June 30th, and are available upon request.

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See you there!

Editor Anna Silliman (wearing new glasses) looks forward to hearing from you! Our best teaching ideas come from our readers.

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Letters

. . .& cards, emails, calls, rumors, etc.

From a long-time subscriber. . .

"One-on-one tutoring is very satisfying, but also very isolating. Your publication brings me into the company of other tutors, teachers and ESL students."

—Elizabeth Gulino
Hasbrouck Heights, NJ

. . .and from a new reader

"I am new to teaching English to speakers of other languages, and I look forward to learning as much about the field as I can. Your publication will be very helpful for me, and I will be going through the long index to order back issues in the future.

"Thank you for all your good work."

—Bronwyn Anthony
Hermosa Beach, CA

Teaching in English—responses

In her last column, our "Dear Abbie" discussed whether ESL teachers should make use of the learners' first language in the classroom. Her advice was to teach only in English. Two readers responded:

"I was around when my [Kurdish] students had their children, was the goodwill person who took them to the doctor and even sat by their bedside when they were treated for cancer. I was their friend and I never needed to speak Kurdish. They needed me to speak English."

—Dianne Scott
Leesburg, FL

". . .I believe that there is a definite place for use of the native language. Of course, use of the native language [in the classroom] is an art—especially when the teacher does not know it. The native language is the greatest source of prior knowledge that our students bring to us. For advanced students as well as beginners, I require that they bring an English to native language dictionary.

"During a lesson, I read their body language to see when they do not understand a word. *They will not tell me.* I always say, 'Good. We'll look it up. This is a great way to learn new words.' I then ask them to write it on the lesson paper, and to tell me the word in their language. When I repeat it. . . .they always crack up when I mispronounce. This relaxes them and conveys: 'I respect you and the language you speak,' and, 'It's OK to make a mistake in my language; I made a mistake in yours.' "

—Walt Lidman, Bilingual/ESL teacher
Christa McAuliffe Middle School
Jackson, NJ

Hints & tips

Follow-up on fables

"We want to add some thoughts to Linda Phipps' 'Fables for Retelling' contribution [Vol. 12, No. 6, p. 4]. We find that if the students know that they will have to do something with the story they've been told by other students, they will listen better and ask for clarification when they don't understand. We call this 'creating a need.' That is, the students listen with more attention and process what they are hearing from other students better because they know they will need to use the information they are getting.

"So, after this first step described by Linda Phipps, we create follow through activities. A frequently used one is to have the students return to the first grouping. They then write a summary on newsprint of the two other stories they only heard about. Finally, the whole class sits near the posted newsprint and works with the teacher as she tries to elicit corrections from them.

"If this 'jigsaw' activity is used with parts of one story, there can be an element of suspense and surprise as the students learn about the rest of the plot. Sometimes we find it useful to sit everybody in a circle (maybe the next day) and have them re-tell the whole story, sentence by sentence."

—Sally Wessels
T-S-T BOCES ESL Program
Ithaca, NY

Tools & techniques:
Revisiting the 'one-question interview'

Eons ago, we published an article about a wonderful activity called the 'one-question interview.' (see Vol. 2, No. 1) We learned about this technique from **Fiona Armstrong,** who was then a teacher in the New York City Public Schools. We are bringing you this information again in order to make sure that everyone knows about this useful technique.

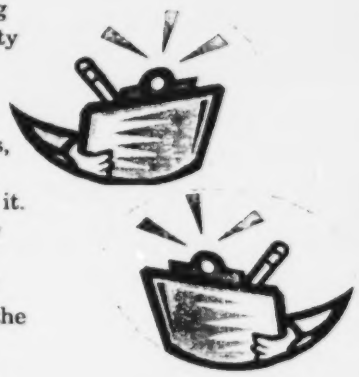
Fiona presented a workshop in which she showed a video of her students as they worked on this lesson. It was astonishing to see how even very beginning students with almost no English could participate in the activity. Once they had carefully learned their assigned question, they were able to speak with each of the other students and gather information. You could see them gaining confidence as they worked and as they got to know the other students. Later they compiled the answers into an effective report or chart that they could present to the other students. In the process, they developed a sense of community within the class.

What it's good for

The 'one-question interview' is a very effective way to introduce a new topic to your class, as it generates a lot of vocabulary and gives students a chance to express their opinions and talk about their experiences. It is easy to implement and requires little advance preparation except for a thoughtful list of questions. You can accommodate students at many different levels by assigning the questions carefully. You can expand the lesson by using the data the students collect in various ways, for example creating graphs, or a narrative.

The topic of the interview could be almost anything, as long as it relates to the students' lives. We've had one-question interviews about getting to know each other, about doing laundry, about health issues, about grocery shopping and about the neighborhood in past issues of *Hands-on English*. Recently a reader contacted us to say she is applying this technique in her civics curriculum, which sounds promising.

The reason it works so well? This type of communication is purposeful and adult. Each student gains information that no one else has access to and they are therefore proud to share it. The interaction helps students become more comfortable working together; the discussion builds class identity and helps foster a community spirit.



How to do it

1. Assign each student one of the questions, or have them choose one. Help them with vocabulary and pronunciation if they need it.
2. Have each student prepare an interview sheet by writing their question at the top and numbering down the left hand side of the page (one number for each student in the class).
3. Assign a number to each student in the class.
4. Present an example of the activity to the students. Draw a model interview sheet on the board. Write a sample interview question at the top. For example, "Where are you from?" Ask each student in the group this question, and record the answer next to each student's number.
5. Ask the class to summarize the results of your survey. For example, "Three students come from Korea and two from China."
6. Now that they understand the activity, have the students stand and proceed to walk around and interview their classmates. They should record the answers they get on their sheet.
7. Assist the students as they work.
8. When the students finish interviewing, have them prepare a summary of their data. This could be a written summary on the board or on poster paper, or it can be an oral summary.
9. Have the students present their findings to the group and discuss the results.

Variations

If you have a large group of students, they can work in pairs. One student functions as the interviewer and the other records the information. Or, you can divide the room into two sections with each half working on the same questions.

If the questions were simple enough all of the student's data could be combined into one class chart. More advanced students can present more complex reports, including graphs.

Here is an example of a set of questions that might be used to introduce a civics unit about local government.

About your city

How long have you lived in this city?

What do you like about this city?

What do you dislike about this city?

Which part of the city do you live in?

How do you come to school?

What do you think about transportation in this city? (Bus, train, etc.)

What do you think about the traffic in this city?

What do you think about the mayor of this city?

What do you think about the size of this city? Is it too big, too small or just right?

Have you ever talked to a police officer here?

Have you visited any church or religious place here? Which one?

Have you visited any city parks here? Which ones?

What schools have you visited here?

Do you have a library card for the public library?

Do you subscribe to a newspaper? Which one?

Here is an example of interview questions with all 'yes / no' answers. This would be suitable for beginning students, to help them get familiar with the present perfect structure. It would be a lot of fun to include foods from the students' own countries in this exercise.

The results from this interview could be combined onto one chart, and the students could calculate percentages for each answer. For example, 100% have eaten pizza. 12% have eaten borscht and 88 percent have not.

About food

Have you ever eaten pizza?

Have you ever eaten pumpkin pie?

Have you ever eaten vanilla ice cream?

Have you ever eaten chocolate ice cream?

Have you ever eaten eggrolls?

Have you ever eaten fried rice?

Have you ever eaten kielbasa?

Have you ever eaten pirogis?

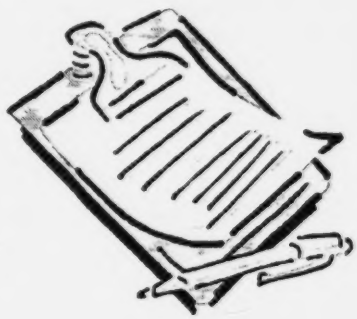
Have you ever eaten borscht?

Have you ever eaten lobster?

Have you ever eaten watermelon?

Have you ever eaten burritos?

Have you ever eaten sushi?



Multi-level dictation:
Seasonal allergies

Some of your students, or their family members, may have allergies. Even if they don't, they'll hear other people complaining about this problem and they'll probably see ads for allergy medications on TV. Here is a reading passage and dictation about this common problem.

Preparation for dictation

Make a copy of the worksheets (A, B, C and D) on the next two pages. Cut apart the levels, enlarge each one (to make the spaces easier to write in), then make copies for your students. Be sure to make extra copies, as students often like to try this activity more than once at different levels.

You may want to read and discuss the story first. A dictation is usually more effective when you are using material the students are already familiar with. The interview questions may be useful as a homework assignment.

How to do it

Have each student select the level they want to try. Read the passage aloud at natural speed, pausing between sentences to give the students time to write. You can repeat the passage as many times as the students wish.

When your students are finished writing the dictation, have them help each other to make corrections. Level A students can provide information for Level B, C, D, and E students, because they have a more complete text!

Note

Be careful not to recommend medications to your students. Over the counter drugs can have unpleasant side effects. Since allergies can be a serious health threat, it is better to advise them to see a doctor.

Spring is allergy season

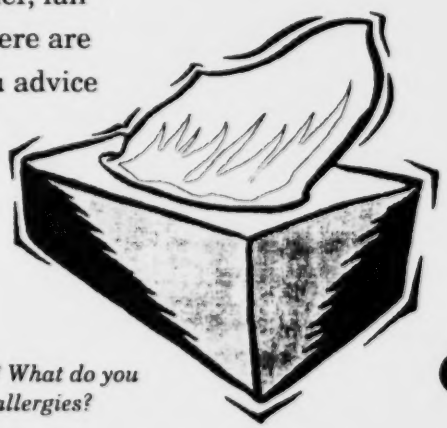
Here is the full text for reading and dictation. It is 13 sentences (118 words) long.

Every spring, most people are happy to see warm weather and sunshine. They like the spring flowers and green trees. But some people have a problem in the spring.

Important words: *breathe, sneeze, itchy, headache, sore throat, medication, advice.*

Some people have allergies. When they breathe the spring air, they start to sneeze. Or, their eyes are red and itchy. Some people get headaches or a sore throat. A few people get very sick.

About 38 percent of Americans have allergies. Many people have this problem in the spring, but there are allergies in the summer, fall and all year also. If you have allergies you can see a doctor. There are some medications that might help you. The doctor can give you advice about what to do.



Discussion

1. Do you know someone with allergies? What symptoms do they have?
2. What can people do to help their allergy problem?
3. What causes allergies?

Interview

Find two people who have allergies. Ask them: *What symptoms do you have? What do you do, when you get allergy problems? Do you go to a doctor? What causes your allergies?* Write down the answers to these questions. Report the answers to the class.

Level A—Spring is allergy season

Every spring, most people are _____ to see warm weather _____ sunshine. They _____ the spring flowers and _____ trees. But some people have a _____ in the spring. Some _____ have allergies. When _____ breathe the spring air, _____ start to sneeze. Or, their _____ are red and itchy. Some people _____ headaches or a sore throat. A few people _____ very _____ .

About 38 percent of _____ have allergies. Many _____ have this problem in the spring, but there are allergies in the _____ , fall and _____ year also. If you have _____ you can see a _____ . There are some medications that might _____ you. The doctor can give you _____ about what to do.

Level B—Spring is allergy season

Every spring, most people _____ _____ _____ _____ warm weather and _____ . _____ _____ the spring _____ and green _____ . But some people _____ _____ _____ in the _____ . _____ _____ _____ allergies. When they breathe _____ _____ _____ , they _____ _____ sneeze. Or, _____ _____ _____ _____ and itchy. Some _____ _____ _____ or a sore _____ . A _____ people _____ _____ _____ .

About 38 _____ of Americans _____ _____ . Many people _____ _____ _____ in the spring, but there are allergies _____ _____ _____ , _____ and _____ _____ also. _____ _____ _____ _____ you can _____ a doctor. There are _____ medications that _____ _____ you. The doctor _____ _____ _____ _____ about what to _____ .

Level C—Spring is allergy season

Every spring, _____ _____ are happy _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ . _____ _____ _____ spring _____ _____ _____ _____ . But _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ in _____ _____ . Some _____ _____ _____ . When _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ , they _____ _____ _____ . Or, _____ _____ _____ _____ and _____ . _____ _____ _____ headaches _____ _____ _____ _____ . _____ _____ _____ _____ very _____ .

_____ _____ _____ _____ _____ have allergies. _____ _____ _____ this problem _____ _____ _____ , but _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ , fall _____ _____ _____ _____ . If you _____ allergies _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ . _____ _____ _____ medications _____ _____ _____ you. _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ advice _____ _____ to do.

Level D—Spring is allergy season

Level E—Spring is allergy season

(Try writing the dictation on a blank piece of paper!)

Follow-up: Retelling activity

Here is a simple retelling activity to give your students some oral practice and a chance to review the story on allergies. This would be a good way to wrap up the lesson, or to review it in a subsequent session.

How to do it

Select a few key words that will help the students remember the gist of the story. We've picked some for you here, but you might want to include more, or fewer words depending on the level of your students.

Each word should be on a separate card or slip of paper. Make enough sets of these for each pair of students. Working together in pairs, students shuffle these cards and then re-order them according to how they would like to use the words to tell the story. (There may be several different ways to do this correctly.)

Retelling: Ask the students to retell the story with their partners. When one student is finished, the other can try it. The two versions don't have to be the same, and the word cards don't have to be in the same order each time.

Re-retelling: Now, combine two pairs of students to make groups of 4. If you have an extra pair left over, they can each go to a new group to make 5. Each student repeats their version of the story again, this time to the larger audience.

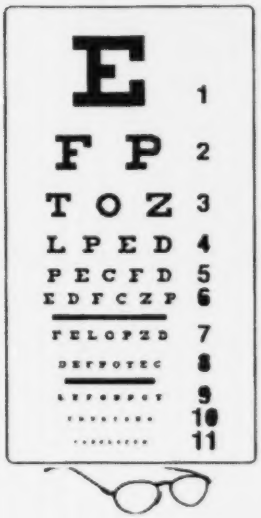
If you like, you can ask volunteers to repeat the story to the entire class. If most students are already very comfortable with the story though, you might skip this step to avoid boredom.

Dictation: Next, have each group select one student to repeat his or her version of the story slowly, while the other students write. When finished, they can collaborate on correcting these dictations.

Since each group's dictation will be slightly different, it may be interesting to post these or circulate them so that the other students can read them.

spring
problem
air
allergies
sneeze
eyes
doctor
medication
help

Reading activity:
Getting new glasses



Recently I noticed that I can't see very well. I told my friend, "Maybe I need new glasses." She said, "You should go to the optometrist." So I made an appointment.

Today I went to the optometrist. They had a lot of machines. They did a lot of tests. They took a picture of each eye. They asked me to look at a bright light. They also asked me to read some letters. "D, H, M, O, S" I said.

The doctor asked me to look into a big machine. I saw some letters, then the letters changed. "Which looks clearer," she asked, "number 1 or number 2?" "Number 1 was clearer," I answered. She asked me some more questions for about 5 minutes.

After this the doctor put away the machine. She said, "Your eyes are healthy. You don't have any eye disease. But your vision has changed a little bit. You need new glasses." She gave me a piece of paper with a new prescription.

Next, I went to the optician's office. It is in the same building. I gave them my prescription. "Would you like to choose a new pair of eyeglass frames?" the assistant asked me. "No," I said, "I want to use my old frames." She measured my glasses and measured my eyes. She told me to wait while they made some new lenses.

When my glasses were ready, the optician put them on and checked them carefully. "How does that feel? Can you see clearly?" I looked at some pictures on the wall. I looked at some customers. I looked out the window. "Yes," I said, "I can see much better now." I paid for the glasses and went home.

Note to instructors:
This reading passage lends itself well to retelling or re-enacting. For a role-playing activity, there are at least 5 roles: the customer, receptionist at the eye doctor's, optometrist, optician and optician's assistant. You may also need an artist to prepare an eye chart, a props committee, and a director to organize everyone.

The puzzle on pages 10–12 gives more vocabulary practice on the same topic.

Optometrist or optician?

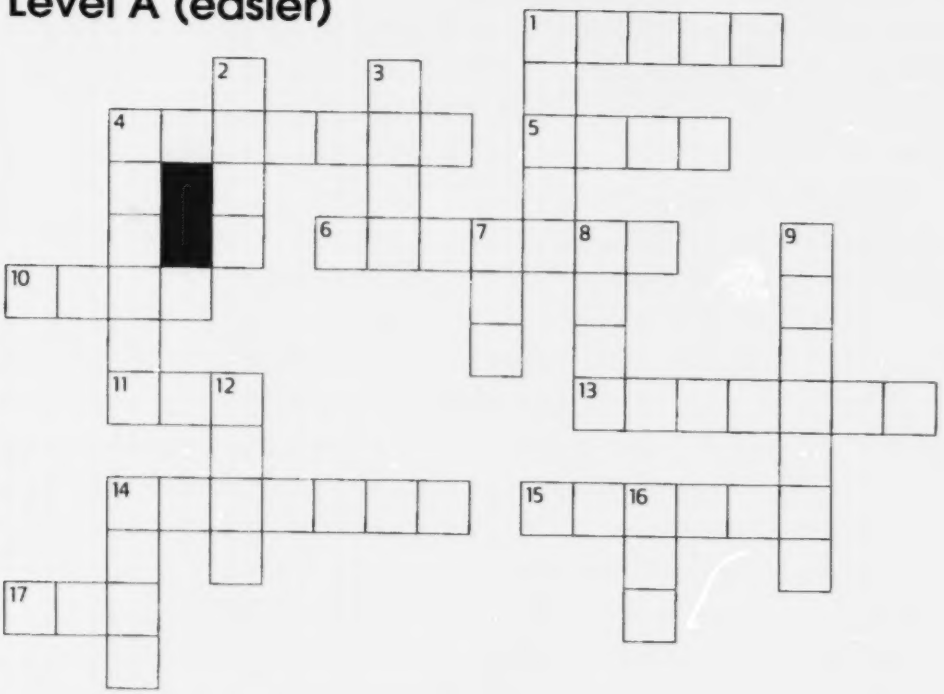
Choose the correct person for each sentence.

1. An _____ can help you choose new eyeglass frames.
2. An _____ can give you advice if you need surgery for your eyes.
3. An _____ can give you an eye exam.
4. An _____ can fix your glasses frames so they fit correctly.
5. An _____ is a person who makes eyeglass lenses.
6. An _____ is an eye doctor.
7. An _____ has a technical job but is not a doctor.
8. An _____ can give you a prescription for new glasses.
9. An _____ can fix your glasses if they break.
10. An _____ can tell you if you have an eye disease.

Writing—Write 5 sentences about the job of an optometrist.
Write 5 sentences about the job of an optician.

Multi-level crossword puzzle:
Getting new glasses

Level A (easier)



Word list

can
car
card
changed
checked
choose
doctor
exam
eye
eyes
fixed
forms
glasses
look
make
minutes
picture
read
see
well

Across clues

1. The optician _____ my broken glasses.
4. Doctor: "Your eyes have _____ a little bit. You need new glasses. I will write you a prescription for new lenses."
5. "Can you _____ these letters?" "Yes, it says E, G, M, X."
6. You can buy reading _____ at the drugstore. You don't need a prescription for these. They are usually cheap.
10. "Your new glasses _____ nice." "Thanks. They were very expensive, though."
11. You can get your vision checked by an _____ doctor.
13. An eye exam only takes a few _____.
14. If you want to get your eyes _____, you should make an appointment with an optometrist.
15. The _____ said my vision is good. I can see 20/20.
17. I have to wear my glasses when I drive a _____ . It says this on my drivers' license.

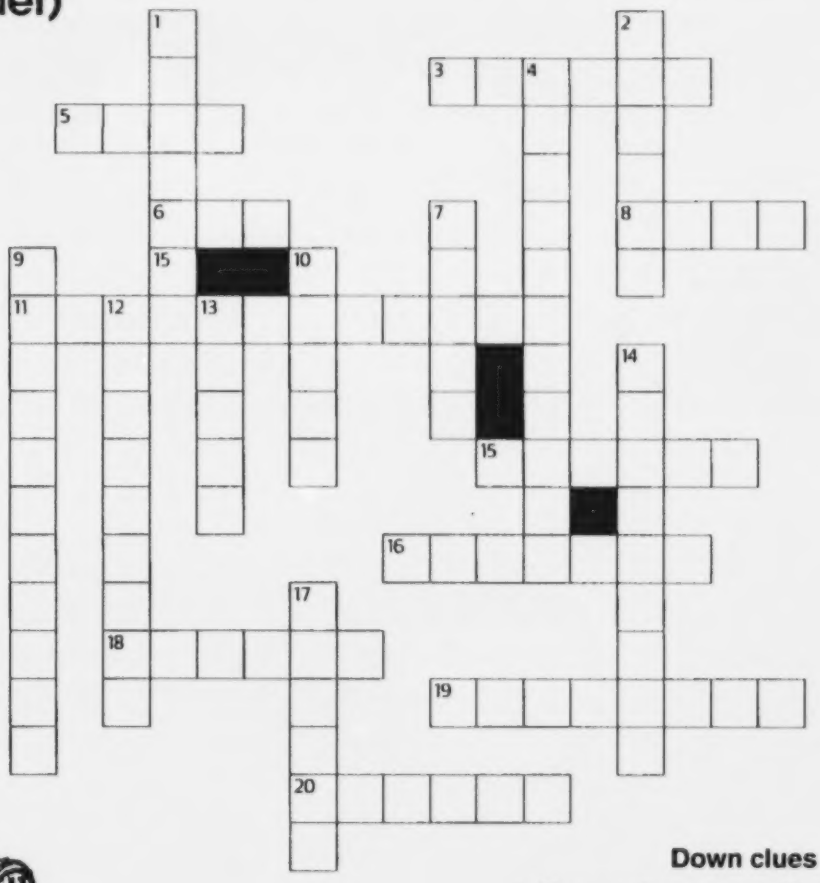
Down clues

1. When you get to the doctor's office, you will have to fill out some _____.
2. Please wait; the optician will _____ new lenses for your glasses.
3. If something is far away, I can't see it very _____. I need to get my eyes checked.
4. Optician: "You can _____ any frames you like for your new glasses."
7. If you can't _____ very well, maybe you need glasses.
8. The optometrist gave me an eye _____. She said my eyes are fine.
9. The doctor will shine a bright light in your eye. Then she will take a _____ of your eye.
12. Sometimes when I read, my ____ hurt.
14. Office assistant: "Do you have insurance?" Patient: "Yes, here's my _____."
16. I'm glad I went to the optometrist. I _____ see much better with my new glasses.

Level B (harder)

Word list

appointment
better
cheap
doctor
drive
exam
expensive
frames
glasses
insurance
lenses
letters
light
office
optician
optometrist
prescription
read
see
vision



Across clues

3. Optician: "You can choose any _____ you like for your new glasses."
5. Sometimes when I _____, my eyes hurt.
6. If something is far away, I can't _____ it very well. I need to get my eyes checked.
8. An eye _____ only takes a few minutes.
11. Doctor: "Your eyes have changed a little bit. You need new glasses. I will write you a _____ for new lenses."
15. The optician will make new _____ for your glasses.
16. "Can you read these _____?" "Yes, it says E, G, M, X."
18. The doctor said my _____ is good. I can see 20/20.
19. The _____ fixed my broken glasses.
20. When you get to the doctor's _____, you will have to fill out some forms.

Down clues

1. If you can't see very well, maybe you need new _____.
2. I'm glad I went to the optometrist. I can see much _____ with my new glasses.
4. If you want to get your eyes checked, you should make an _____ with an optometrist.
7. I have to wear my glasses when I _____ a car. It says this on my drivers' license.
9. The _____ gave me an eye exam. She said my eyes are fine.
10. The doctor will shine a bright _____ in your eye. Then she will take a picture of your eye.
12. "Your new glasses look nice." "Thanks. They were very _____, though."
13. You can buy reading glasses at the drugstore. You don't need a prescription for these. They are usually _____.
14. Office assistant: "Do you have _____?" Patient: "Yes, here's my card."
17. You can get your vision checked by an eye _____.

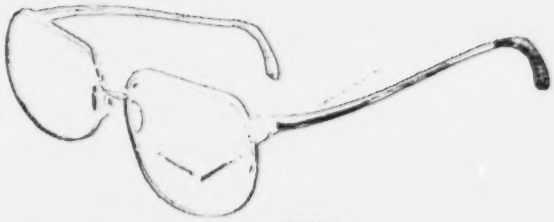
Note to instructors:

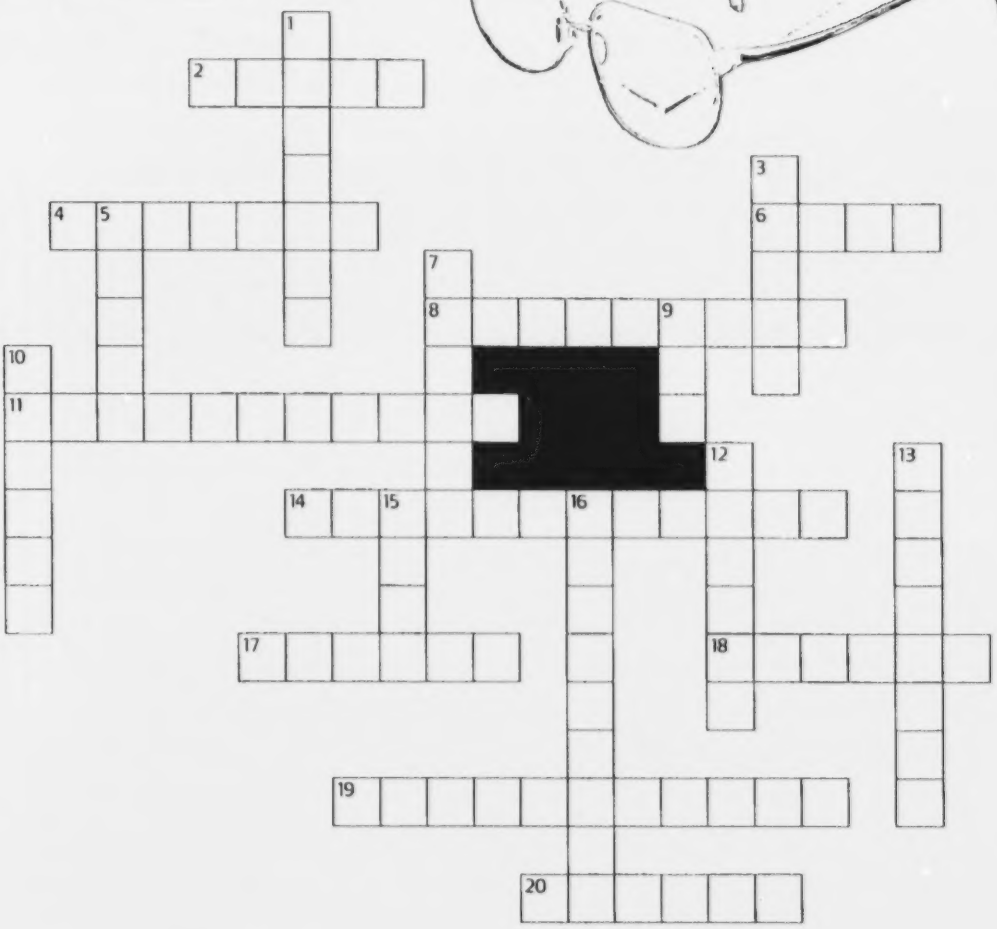
The Level B puzzle has the same sentences for clues as Level A, but the missing words are a little bit more challenging.

The Level C puzzle (next page) uses the same words for answers as Level B, but the clues are more challenging.

Many students like to try the puzzle at different levels, so be prepared with extra copies of each one!

Level C (hardest)





Word list

appointment
better
cheap
doctor
drive
exam
expensive
frames
glasses
insurance
lenses
letters
light
office
optician
optometrist
prescription
read
see
vision

Across clues

2. The opposite of expensive.
4. If you have trouble with your vision, you might need to wear these.
6. I don't need glasses to drive, but I do need glasses to _____.
8. This means they cost a lot.
11. This person can prescribe new glasses for you.
14. This paper says exactly what kind of lenses you need for your glasses.
17. There are many different styles of glasses _____.
18. The workplace for an optometrist is called an _____.
19. The date and time when you will meet the doctor is your _____.
20. If your vision gets _____, that means it improves.

Down clues

1. You will see many of these on an eye chart.
3. You shouldn't ____ without your glasses.
5. The doctor uses this to look inside your eye.
7. The _____ go inside your glasses frames.
9. I couldn't ____ the letters on the chart because they were too small.
10. An optician is not a _____.
12. Have you had your _____ checked this year?
13. This person can prepare new lenses for your glasses.
15. When you apply for a driver's license, the DMV will give you a quick eye ____ .
16. If you have this, you don't have to pay 100% of the doctor's bill.

Reading activity:
Dictionary practice

Getting into it

Starting with the low intermediate level, we like ESL students to start using a monolingual (English-English) dictionary. Of course, they will continue to use a bilingual dictionary as well, but looking up words in a 'learner's dictionary' geared specifically toward ESL will help them stretch and expand their skills. It will also give them some tools they can apply to their future learning process.

Don't expect that students will automatically know how to use a dictionary, however. Even a carefully written 'sheltered' dictionary is quite technical and somewhat daunting to those unfamiliar with it. But if you include some dictionary activities in your lessons, you can help the students to get more comfortable using this resource.

Here is a worksheet designed to get your students hunting and browsing through the dictionary, as well as finding the main idea in the definition.

Note: You can find other dictionary exercises in past issues. There was a dictionary puzzle in: Vol. 2, No. 2; Vol. 3, No. 3; Vol. 10, No. 5.

Find the page number

Look up each word in your English dictionary. Write the page number where you found it.

Look at each group of three words. They are the same kind of thing. What are they? Write the category.

All of these words are nouns. In the dictionary, nouns are marked "n".

1. jazz p. _____
2. rock and roll p. _____
3. bluegrass p. _____

These are all kinds of _____.

4. missile p. _____
5. torpedo p. _____
6. gun p. _____

These are all _____.

7. skunk p. _____
8. rat p. _____
9. raccoon p. _____

These are all _____.

10. governor p. _____
11. senator p. _____
12. mayor p. _____

These are all _____.

13. smallpox p. _____
14. measles p. _____
15. influenza p. _____

These are all _____.

16. asparagus p. _____
17. brussels sprouts p. _____
18. okra p. _____

These are all _____.

Choose the category

Some of these words are about biology (the study of life) and some are about geology (the study of rocks and land).

Look up each word in your dictionary and read the definition. Choose which category the word belongs to.

	Biology	Geology
1. quartz		
2. volcano		
3. cell		
4. chlorophyll		
5. igneous		
6. lung		
7. cave		
8. DNA		
9. cancer		
10. erosion		

Grammar grab-bag:
Excuses, excuses!

Modals of ability: couldn't, wasn't able to

Here is a light-hearted way for students to get familiar with two constructions they need to use in everyday life. Both of these forms are typically taught rather late in most grammar courses; however we don't feel these should be reserved for advanced students. Even beginners can understand and learn to use these forms.

Begin by asking the question: "Why didn't you come to class yesterday?" If you happen to have a student who was absent the day before, you can use this student for your example. (Tell the student about this before class so he or she doesn't get embarrassed.) Otherwise, you can pretend that you came to class yesterday and *everybody* was absent. Then ask each student what they were doing.

Write the student's answer on the board. For example, "I had a doctor's appointment." Then complete the answer by writing: "I couldn't come to class yesterday because I had a doctor's appointment." Now practice the same question with a few other students until they get the hang of it.

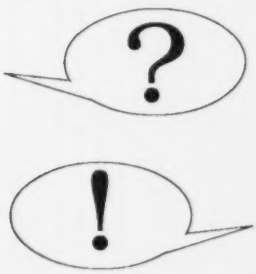
Next, give the students the handout below. On the left are some possible questions and and the right are some excuses. Ask a student to form a question and ask one of the other students. For example: "Jaime, why didn't you answer your telephone last night?" Now Jaime can form an answer using one of the excuses (or make up his own), using the structure *I couldn't. . .because. . .*

Do a few examples until the students are confident about their answers. Then they can continue practicing this in pairs. As a final step, do the whole activity over again but this time practice answering with the structure: *I wasn't able to. . .because. . .* Write this on the board as a guide for them to use as they practice.

Why didn't you come to class yesterday?
I couldn't come to class because I was sick.

Questions *Why didn't you. . .?*	**Excuses** *I couldn't . . .because. . .*
come to class yesterday	I was sick.
meet me yesterday at 3:00	I was in the bathtub.
answer your telephone last night	I had a dentist appointment.
come to my party last Saturday	My friend was sick.
call me last night	My friend was having a baby.
write me a letter	I was having a baby.
do your homework	I broke my arm.
talk to me when I said "hello"	I was watching the news on T.V.
visit me on Sunday	My car broke down.
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Conversation activity:
"I couldn't come to class because I had to go to the INS."



This speaking activity is a follow-up to the grammar work on the previous page. Once students are familiar with the forms, they can practice them in a more open-ended fashion this way.

Preparation

Write each of the example question prompts from the previous page onto a separate card or slip of paper. Add a few more, such as:

take your driver's test
go to the graduation ceremony at school
send me an email message
go to your doctor's appointment
go to your job interview

Keep these 'questions' cards in a separate stack.

Next, prepare a set of 'excuses' cards using the examples from the previous page. Add a few more, for example:

I was visiting my neighbor.
I was in the hospital.
I had a job interview.
I had to go to the INS.

Keep these 'excuses' cards in a separate stack.

Pair work

Have the students sit in pairs or in groups of 3. Give them some blank cards, and ask them to think of some excuses, or good reasons for a person to be absent or to miss an appointment. They can have fun with this and write each excuse on a separate card. You should check over these to make sure they are legible and correct.

Collect all the students' cards and shuffle them together with your prepared batch.

Role-playing

Distribute the excuses cards to each group and place them upside down on the table. Ask one student from each group to draw one of your 'questions' cards. This student will question the others. To answer, the other students draw an 'excuses' card from the pile. They must try to use this excuse in their answer. (Note: If the card they drew really makes no sense in the context of the question they may draw a second card.)

When they have finished, the students can switch roles, draw new cards and repeat the activity. Repeat this as often as seems interesting.

On the spot

For a slightly more challenging task, ask for two volunteers to come to the front of the class. Each student draws a card, one from the questions and one from the excuses. They present an improvised conversation based on the cues on their cards.

Follow up with writing

Hand each student two of the cards—a question and an excuse. Ask them to write a letter of apology to the (imaginary) person who was disappointed. You can put an example on the board to show them how:

Dear Fred,

I'm sorry I missed your birthday party. I couldn't come because my car broke down on the highway. I had to call a friend to help me fix it and it was very late when we got home.

I hope you had a nice birthday! Maybe we can meet for coffee some time next week. I'll see you at school and we can talk about it.

Yours truly,
John

Why it works

This speaking activity is good practice for all levels. Beginning students will have a chance to practice the forms in an almost-real-life context. Intermediate students can embellish their story with details and more complete explanations, giving them good practice in speaking in front of others. For advanced students, it's a good exercise in thinking on your feet and making a clear presentation.

The activity can be funny, and humor is always an assist to learning. At the very least, the element of surprise will keep everyone listening with interest.

Tools & techniques:

Lessons from a student story

Contributed by ***Mary Grace****, ESL teacher in Wolftown, Virginia.*

You can create memorable, multi-faceted lessons that will help students with all their language skills—using a story told by one of your students. Mary's version focuses on verb tense review, but the lesson gives practice in listening, speaking, reading and writing at the same time.

My students really enjoy this verb tense exercise! They seem to enjoy the learning process more when it is combined with new information about a different culture or about an individual. The activity can be used to build community within the classroom.

This series of exercises is great in sequence or taken bit by bit. The whole shebang might take approximately one hour, after steps 1–3 have been completed (preparing the student's story). This activity works best for intermediate and advanced students. However, you can easily use steps 1–7 with beginning students, either as is or using pictures and drawings ("chalk talk").

You need: paper, marker, board and chalk (or dry erase markers), large paper taped to wall near board or on an easel.

How to do it

1. If you have an opportunity to meet with a student individually, such as before class, you can ask the student what he or she did that week (or any other appropriate question). As the student tells the story, write it out on paper in correct English, being sure to maintain the integrity of the student's story.
2. Have the student read it over a couple of times out loud to you so that you can help if needed.
3. Ask your learner if it is okay to share the story with the class; if it's not okay simply proceed with a different lesson.
4. When the other students join the class, have the student read this story aloud. If the pronunciation is hard to understand, you can have the student can repeat after you.
5. Talk about any questions or clarifications, then read the story aloud to the students again.
6. Invite the students to retell the story, or whatever they can remember. As they speak, write it out on a board for all to see, using correct grammar. This doesn't need to be chronological and should be rather informal and fun.
7. Read the newly assembled story aloud, then together with the students once or twice.
8. Have the students identify all the verbs by underlining them (students can do this).
9. On a separate piece of paper (on the wall or an easel near the board), make a chart to record the verbs in their correct tenses, adding all the other tenses to appropriate spaces on the chart.
10. Now read the story on the board again.
11. Make a fill-in-the-blank exercise (a so-called 'cloze') by erasing all the verbs, but leaving the underlining. A student can do this.
12. Next, have the students read the story together, putting in all the verbs orally. Then ask for a volunteer who will repeat this task individually. Invite other students to try, too.
13. Finally, invite individual students to write the proper verb tenses into the blanks. Once it's correct, read it one last time.

At the end of the lesson, give the author of the story the original copy to take home.

Follow up

For the next lesson, you can type out the story, duplicate it and cut it into strips. Have small groups of students reassemble it into the correct order. They can circle the nouns or mark any difficult words.

You can now try a dictation of the story. When the students have finished writing, they can refer back to the story strips for corrections.

Why it works

This will be a memorable lesson because the story is about something real from someone the students know. It helps to build language skills by working back and forth between listening/speaking, reading and writing; each step reinforces the next. The students will love the mini-grammar lesson that is built into the activity.

Imagine how proud that one student will be, to have provided the material for an entire lesson!

Each of the verbs in the student's story goes into a chart like this:

go	*going*	*goes*	*went*	*gone*
fall	*falling*	*falls*	*fell*	*fallen*
lose	*losing*	*loses*	*lost*	*lost*
find	*finding*	*finds*	*found*	*found*

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Hands-on English
Reader survey

We'd really like to know what you think about *Hands-on English*, and what we can do for you that would be of greatest benefit!

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Approximately how many years have you subscribed?
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Dear Readers,

It's been a couple of years since we did a formal survey, and although we do hear from many of you occasionally, we thought it was time to get some real feedback!

If you can take a moment to fill this out, tear it off and mail it to us, we will be very, very interested to hear from you! We'll report the results we get in a future issue, so you can find out what others are saying as well.

(Your name is not necessary unless you would like a response.)

Thank you very much! Your input will help us to create a better, even more useful publication.

— the Editor.

Customer service

Have you received all of your issues so far? ○ Yes ○ No

If not, which issues are you missing? _____

Can we improve our service to you in any way?

The publication

Is the level of our activities usually appropriate (or adaptable) for your students?

○ Yes ○ No If not, is the level too high for your students or too low?

What features of *Hands-on* have been the **most** helpful to you?

What features are **least** helpful?

What topics would you and your students like us to cover in future issues?

What other kinds of articles and features would you like to see in future issues?

Other comments?

The website

Have you used our website? ○ Yes ○ No

Are the current events activities on our website useful to you?

If so, please help with any suggestions for topics/activities that your students might enjoy:

Our publicity

Do you have any suggestions about how we can let more teachers know about *Hands-on English*?

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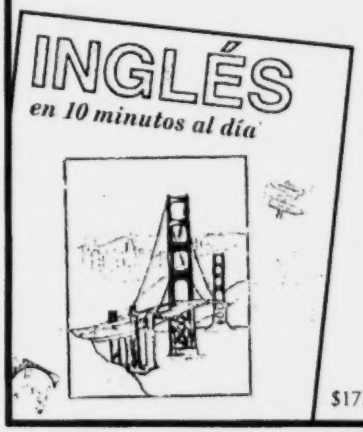

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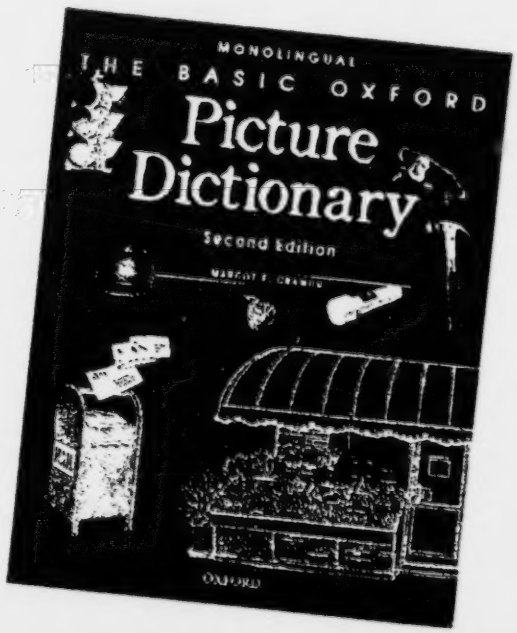

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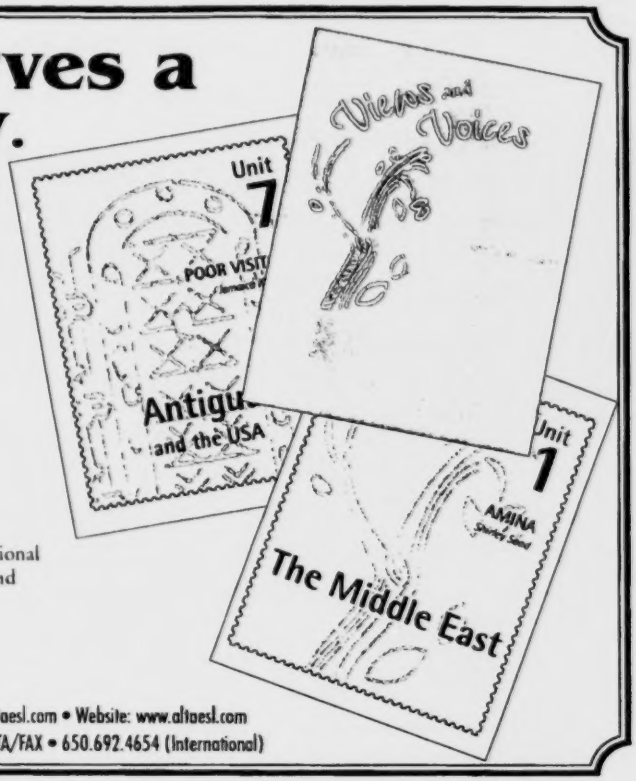

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News & notes

Ideas from past issues

For a multi-level crossword **about spring** see Vol. 11, No. 1 page 8. Even better, see Vol. 9, No 6 page 8 for a reading and multi-level puzzle about **spring cleaning**! In Vol. 11, No. 1 there is also a multi-level dictation on the topic of a **high school graduation** ceremony.

Although bad weather comes any time of year, unfortunately this year spring storms have already been in the news. See Vol. 8, No. 2 for **'Storms and natural disasters,'** a multi-level crossword puzzle that may seem timely.

Still time to apply for grants

Our Hands-on English Mini-grants are intended to support special teaching projects. The deadline for applying is June 30th. Please contact *Hands-on English* for further information or see our website, www.handsonenglish.com .

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Volume 13, Number 2 July/August 2003

Hands-on English

A periodical for teachers and tutors of adult English as a second language

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Our readers respond

In our May/June issue, we printed a reader survey and to this point, we've received about twenty of these back, plus some email and phone responses. Although this sounds like a small number, actually it is a good sampling that can give us a fair idea of how things are going. And, as usual when we hear from readers, there were plenty of useful suggestions and good ideas!

About half of the surveys came from relatively new subscribers (1 to 3 years) and the other half from veterans (6 to 10 years). All said they were pleased with our customer service. Most said the level of the activities is appropriate for their students. One reader summed this up: "Usually you have at least one [activity] that I can bring to the classroom. Variety is the key." Another reader did comment that the level is too high for her beginning class. We've tried harder this past year to include lower level options, and we'll keep trying. Yet another reader is looking for more advanced level topics. (If we get more advanced material, though, we'd be more likely to put it on our website than in the print publication, just due to space limits.)

"You're doing a great job. Fresh ideas for overworked teachers." —a reader.

Among the most useful features in HOE, the multi-level crosswords and dictations got the most votes. Also mentioned were grammar activities, readings, games and "practical stuff." "Everything" got a few votes, and one reader mentioned "encouragement" as a useful feature of HOE. (I was very pleased to see this, as that is really my main purpose for doing this publication!)

The question of 'least useful' features was left blank on most surveys. Some did mention letters and ads as less useful, but it is clear from other comments that many readers do find those interesting as well; they are just not useful in the classroom.

The motherlode of ideas

We were looking for suggestions for articles and activity topics, and did we ever get them! Ideas for topics included: apartment & house-hunting, car parts, social security, elections and voting, tools and equipment, shopping, current events (several mentioned this), talking on the phone, cultural differences in a business setting, simple home repairs, healthy snacks, hobbies, U.S. culture, and lifeskills topics in general. That should keep us busy for a while. . .

Many people also raised questions they would like to see addressed in future issues. If you can help with any of these, let us know! Questions included: how parents can make their home a learning environment for kids; how to help with accent reduction; how to use computers for ESL with only a limited time allotment; advice on working with classes that meet only twice a week; how parents can communicate with their child's teacher. Other activities some readers would like include: conversation starters, like dialogues; writing activities; more activities and tips for one-on-one tutoring.

Thanks for these great suggestions! If you sent in a reader survey and your comment wasn't mentioned, don't worry—not everything would fit here but we do read and consider them all. If you haven't sent yours in yet, it's never too late. Happy teaching!

—the Editor.

Hands-on English
Volume 13, Number 2
July/August 2003

Hands-on English (ISSN 1056-2680) is published six times a year (Jan./Feb., March/April, May/June, July/Aug., Sept./Oct., Nov./Dec) by Hands-on English, P.O. Box 256, Crete, Nebraska 68333 USA.
Printing by *The Printer* in Lincoln, NE.

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About the publication

We're in our second decade! *Hands-on English* has been helping teachers and tutors with practical teaching ideas since 1991. The editor is a former ESL teacher who has taught ESL to adults in many different settings, and is familiar with the fun and the challenges involved.

The articles and ideas in HOE come from experienced teachers and tutors, including our readers. If you have a lesson or teaching suggestion you would like to share, we welcome your input!

Who reads H.O.E.?

Our subscribers work with ESL students in a wide range of programs, including: Refugee programs, Literacy programs, Community colleges, Colleges and universities, Correctional facilities, Resource centers, **Adult Education programs**, Volunteer tutoring, Intensive ESL programs, Teacher training programs, Religious organizations, Worker's unions, Community Education programs, Secondary schools, Workplace education, Language institutes, Libraries . . .and more!

What do our readers have in common? They are dedicated, they are working under sometimes difficult conditions, and they are looking for practical, adult-level materials that will help their students learn English.

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Hands-on English awards a few small grants (of up to $200 each) annually for practical, innovative classroom projects. Applications are due each June 30th, and are available upon request.

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Editor Anna Silliman always looks forward to hearing from you! Our best teaching ideas come from our readers.

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13-2

Letters

. . .& cards, emails, calls, rumors, etc.

Optician-Optometrist-Ophthalmologist

In our last issue, we brought you a reading about eye care called "Getting new glasses" (Vol. 13, No. 1, p. 9). Two readers contacted us with concern about this statement: "An optometrist can give you advice if you need surgery for your eyes." Although this is true, they were worried that students would therefore think that an optometrist is a medical doctor who does eye surgery, which is usually the role of an ophthalmologist. So, to clarify, here is an explanation of these 3 professions:

1. Opticians usually work for an eye doctor (optometrist or ophthalmologist). They fill prescriptions for lenses and fit them on the patient. Usually they have a 2-year Associate of Science degree; in many states they are licensed and/or certified.
2. Optometrists are primary health care providers who diagnose vision conditions, as well as diseases and eye disorders. They prescribe eyeglasses and medications if needed for treatment. They have a Doctor of Optometry (DO) degree which is usually a 4-year program after college that includes clinical training (similar to dentistry) and Board certification.
3. Ophthalmologists are medical doctors (MD). They are also called 'eye doctors.' They treat eye disease, do eye surgery and sometimes research. Their training includes 4 years of medical school after college, 1 year internship, 3 years hospital residency and often 1 to 2 years additional specialty training, plus Board certification.

If you want to make sure you have healthy eyes, you should see an optometrist once a year for a checkup. If they discover a serious problem they might refer you to an ophthalmologist for specialized treatment. We hope this clears up any misunderstanding.

Could you speak a little louder?

Recently we had a nice phone conversation with an ESL teacher whose class meets in a school cafeteria. She says it is usually too noisy there to hear anything. How on earth does she do it?? We thought this was a great example of the kinds of challenges ESL teachers have to overcome.

Take some extra copies of HOE!

In our reader survey we've asked for suggestions on how to spread the word about *Hands-on English*. We got some very useful responses, with the consensus being that word-of-mouth is the best approach. Several readers offered to take copies of HOE to meetings and conferences to share with other teachers. If you would like to have some extra copies to distribute, don't hesitate to contact us! Let us know how many you need, the date you need them by and where you'd like them sent. We are happy to share these, and appreciate your help! Thank you! —Editor.

HOE is versatile!

"I really look forward to receiving this in the mail; I teach a mixed class—ESL, ABE, GED and find the material very adaptable."

—Marléne Lang
Olean, NY

"I teach a multi-level adult class in Kings Beach, California. Your dictations (especially the allergy one, Vol. 13, No. 1) work really well in getting the whole class working together and giving the beginners a sense of accomplishment as they help correct the more advanced students. They love thse activities and we spend at least an hour every time on them. Thanks for including such activities that can be used in a true multi-level setting."

—Beth Bradford
Truckee, CA

"Please keep up including the crossword puzzles and conversational dialogues. My beginning Japanese adults love both of these sections and learn new vocabulary and listening skills."

—Pat Banning
Scott Depot, WV

"I wasn't going to renew, but your last issue was *so* great!"

—a reader in North Carolina

Whew! That was a close one! —Editor.

Hints & tips

Successful grouping

Sally Winn, in San Francisco, California, sends us this very useful classroom management tip:

"For years I struggled with pair work. There always seemed to be one student in every class who, for whatever reason—low ability, strong personality, weak pronunciation skills—was a challenge to work with. Students would sometimes roll their eyes or groan when assigned this person as a partner. I finally decided to redesign pair activities to accomodate threes or fours, always! It changes the dynamics entirely. I find that by adding an additional person, the group works better as a whole. Sometimes one will pair up with the weaker student to help out or the two better students are just happier knowing they have each other and are more tolerant and helpful to the third. It makes a world of difference and improves everyone's morale—including mine!"

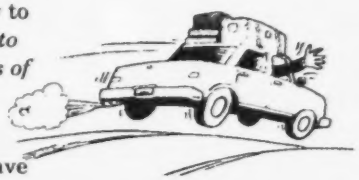
Editor's note: We've heard groups of 3 students referred to as "tryads." It sounds like a win-win-win combination!

Field trip suggestions

Very often summer teaching has a more low-key atmosphere than teaching during the regular school year. The reason might be there are fewer people around (if other programs are out of session) or just that everyone's pace slows down a bit in summer. In any case, frequently you can do fun things in summer programs that are too much trouble to arrange at other times—like field trips, for example!

Start small, by thinking of outdoor expeditions the class can make on foot. For example, a walk to the library or a guided tour of a nearby business. For beginning students you can design a "treasure hunt" of items within a one-block radius of your classroom. For example, "What is the number on the building across from the school? What color is the sign on the door?"

If you are able to organize a more wide-ranging expedition, consider visiting a park, going to some garage sales or attending a street festival. These activities can also be assigned as "homework," where small groups of students go together and then report the next day to the class. As a model for how to organize this, see the wonderful book *'A to Zany,' Community Activities for Students of English* by Lynn Stafford-Yilmaz (U of Michigan Press 1998).



What do Americans do when they have free time in the summer? Inevitably, they drive somewhere to visit relatives. You can describe this to your students, sharing a personal story if you like. Describing a trip of their own makes a great assignment for the students. Or they can interview an American friend or colleague about a summer trip and write about this for the class.

Open-ended conversation

"Each year I find I focus more on finding ways to motivate students to communicate with each other, starting with the "Conversation Circle" from 9:00 until about10:00 each day. In September, my students came with some knowledge of present, past and future tenses, but little or no facility in expressing ideas, and so I had to draw out their experiences little by little— always by raising something that was of immediate interest to them, and then building on that. (Sounds like common sense!) Now, they just come in, and begin talking about something that they've done or seen—and as people come in, they enter into whatever topic of conversation happens to be in progress."

—Sister Maisie Lufkin
LSA Family Health Service
East Harlem, NY

Editor's note: This sounds so simple, but it is a way of teaching that involves a lot of mutual trust. The teacher has to trust the students to know what they need to work on and has to trust that the best topics are student-directed ones. The students have to learn to trust that practicing English in this unstructured way does bring good results. They also have to learn not to be afraid of making mistakes, because the communication is more important than errors. This is a sign of a positive working relationship!

Tools & techniques:

Learning students' names

*—by **Karin Abell**, ESL Coordinator at Durham Tech Community College in Durham, North Carolina.*

Karin wrote this article for her ESL staff newsletter and kindly sent it to us as well. What a great way to get off to a good start with a new class!

As anyone who has worked in ESL knows, foreign names can be a source of confusion. Sometimes students want to be called by their surname rather than first name; some students have in-class names that are completely different from the name on the roster. Sometimes you'll find that you have several students with similar names, like the semester when I had students named HeeJeong, HaeJung, and an HyeonJae. As the teacher, you have to keep track of everything name-related, and it's best to learn your students' names as quickly as possible. Not only will you feel more comfortable with a group of students once you know all of their names, but attendance and paperwork will be much easier once the names are familiar.

Learning names is much like learning vocabulary; many of the same tricks are helpful, such as repetition. Here are some suggestions for learning students' names quickly.

• Do an in-class icebreaker where students introduce themselves by name. Keep a list of student names with you as you do this. Take notes if possible, including a phonetic version of the name ("My-koh" for "Maiko") and/or a physical description of the student to help match the name to the face. Encourage students to talk a little about their names. If you learn something interesting about a name, it might "stick" more easily.

• Sometimes, you can come up with a memory trick to remember a student's name. Once in a while, a student will offer you a memory trick: recently, a student named HyeRi told me, "It's like Harry in Harry Potter." It sounds silly, but it really worked to help me remember her name.

• As students introduce themselves in class, include some review. For instance, after three or four students have introduced themselves, ask a student to name everyone who has already spoken.

• Use a name card system during the first few days of class (or all semester, if you like). You can make "name tents" out of large (5 by 8) index cards folded lengthwise. Students can write their names on both sides. Encourage students to write their names in big enough letters that you can see the words from across the room. As students do their in-class assignments, you can study the name cards.

• Sometimes, students only do one activity where they say their own names. Is it realistic to learn how to pronounce a word you've only heard once? Not necessarily. You can set up several opportunities where students have to say their own names. They can do several "get to know you" activities in class, or you can have them say their names before speaking during the first few days of class. Also, listen to how the students pronounce each other's names (especially students who are from the same country) in order to see how correct your pronunciation is.

• After the first class, look over your class list. Ask yourself how many names you definitely can match to students. Work hard at learning the names you don't already know during the next class session(s).

• Use seating arrangements to your advantage. If you have two students with the same or similar names, it can be less confusing for you if you get them to sit on different sides of the room. Seating charts can also help, but even without a seating chart, you'll probably find that some students gravitate towards the same seats each time. You can work this to your advantage: "Claudia has brown hair and usually sits by the window." "Mario has glasses and usually sits right in the front."

• Use students' names often. In addition to calling on students by name during class activities, you can greet students as they come into the classroom ("Hi, Yuka!"). Once you've used the students' names a number of times, they're more likely to stick in your mind.

• Returning assignments can be a way to help learn names; thus, it is a good idea to have students do some written work during the first few days of class.

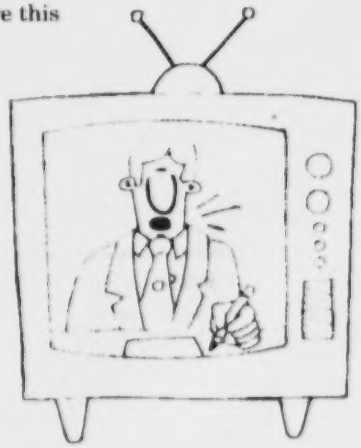
Grammar grab-bag:
"Did you hear the news?"

Using reported speech

Here is an example of a context in which we frequently use reported speech structures. Typically, students do not study this form until they reach an advanced level of English, but there is no reason they can't learn a common use of it at an earlier stage.

Explain that sometimes people don't listen to the news every day, so they are surprised when they hear the news later. Show them the two examples. It seems strange that we always use the past tense (see second example), but that's because we are saying what we *didn't know* before this minute!

You can improve this activity by substituting up-to-date examples of recent news events, especially ones your students know about.



Examples: (There **was** an airplane crash in Canada.)
"Did you hear about the airplane crash in Canada?"
"No, I didn't know there **was** an airplane crash in Canada."

(There **is** a very bad storm coming.)
"Did you hear about the bad storm coming?"
"No, I didn't know there **was** a storm coming."

Pretend that you are surprised to hear this news.
Write your answers in the blank spaces.

1. "Did you hear about the protests in Hong Kong?"

   No, I didn't know _____

2. "Did you hear about the storm in Florida?"

   No, _____

3. "Did you hear about the war in Iraq?"

   No, _____

4. "Did you hear about the economic crisis in Argentina?"

   No, _____

5. "Did you hear about the ferry boat accident in Bangladesh?"

   No, _____

Now write some questions of your own!
Then ask someone else if they have heard the news.

Conversation activity:
Did you hear about. . .

Surprising news

This activity gives students a chance to practice what is a major form of small talk for many Americans—exchanging interesting tidbits of information. If you have high intermediate or advanced students, they may want to use the reported speech grammar structure learned on the previous page, but if not that's okay—it's not necessary.

Show the model conversation to your students, or relate to them a similar surprising piece of information that you recently heard about. Ask them if they can remember hearing this news. Who told them about it?

Next, explain that people like to talk about recent events, whether it's bad news, good news, or something funny or interesting that happened. They like to share how they feel about these events. Have the students generate a list of responses (like "Isn't that sad?"). What can you say if someone tells you some good news? What about some exciting sports news? What can you say if the news is just interesting, or not very interesting?

Next, give the students a chance to practice this by using the role cards below. Each student gets one card, with a tidbit of "news" to relate. Have them meet in pairs for some short conversations. If they like, they can continue talking about these issues. Before they get bored though, ask them to switch partners and try the exercise again. Do this as many times as seems useful.

It will help if you supply a few news items that are really current so that the students can express real interest rather than pretending. After they are familiar with the exercise, students might volunteer their own news items for further practice or interesting discussion.

"Did you hear about the twins from Iran?"

"No, I didn't. What happened?"

"They didn't survive."

"Oh, no—you mean they both died?"

"Yes. Isn't that sad?"

"Yes, it's terrible."

the Powerball lottery winner	the man who was in a coma for 19 years
the stock market	the shooting in Iraq
the weather report	the floods in Indiana

Current events:
Countries in the news

To do this exercise, your students may want to skim through some newspapers or news magazines to find the relevant information. Students who already know some of the answers can share what they know with the other students.

This is a four-way matching exercise. First, the students should try to match each country with the event that happened there. They can fill in this information on the chart on the next page.

Next, they match each of these items with the correct location of the country and with its capital city. To do this they may need to consult an atlas or world map. They can choose the answers from the lists below and write them in the correct spaces on the chart.

Follow-up

Have each student select a news event and present a short factual report to the class about what happened there.

Advanced students can prepare their own matching exercise, using a selected newspaper or magazine. They can then trade papers with another student and try to make the correct matches.

Match each country with the correct event:

COUNTRY	EVENT
China	This country recently fought a war in Iraq.
Iraq	This small country is having a civil war; the U.S. might send troops there.
Liberia	Leaders in this country are talking about an agreement called "The Roadmap for Peace."
United Kingdom	The largest dam in the world was recently completed here, called "Three Gorges Dam."
Indonesia	Soldiers from this country joined the U.S. soldiers in Iraq.
Japan	This rich country used to be controlled by whites, now blacks control the government.
Israel	There was a short war in this country. The former leader of the country has disappeared.
South Africa	This country has the 2nd largest economy in the world but now they have a recession.
Argentina	This country had a financial crisis a few months ago and all the banks were closed.
U.S.	The leader of this large country is a woman; they have troubles with terrorist bombings.

Now, match each location to the correct country. Write your answers on the chart.

LOCATION

This country is on the Mediterranean Sea. It borders Egypt and Jordan.
This country is at the southern end of Africa.
This country is in west Africa.
This country is south of Turkey and north of Saudi Arabia.
This country is made up of many small islands between the South Pacific and the Indian Ocean.
This country is made up of several islands in the North Atlantic Ocean.
This country is made up of several islands in the North Pacific Ocean.
One side of this country is next to the Pacific Ocean.
This country is on the southern end of South America.
This country is north of Mexico.

Finally, choose the correct capital city for each country and write it on the chart:

CAPITAL CITY

London	Johannesburg
Beijing	Buenos Aires
Jakarta	Washington, D.C.
Monrovia	Jerusalem
Tokyo	Bagdad

Use this chart for your answers.

COUNTRY	EVENT	LOCATION	CAPITAL CITY
U.S.	fought a war in Iraq	n. of Mexico	Washing-ton, D.C.

Reading activity:
Talking about symptoms

Being able to describe symptoms to a doctor is vitally important for our students, both for themselves and for any family members they are caring for. Of course there is no way to "teach" all of the vocabulary a person might conceivably need for this purpose! However, it is useful to practice talking about symptoms in general and to get accustomed to the kinds of questions frequently asked in doctor's offices.

Here is a reading passage about a typical phone call to the doctor's office. Your students might like to practice reading this one aloud. See if the students can remember other questions they've heard at the doctor's. List these on the board and discuss them; students can write them down for future reference.

The discussion questions give the students a chance to widen their vocabulary; they may wish to bring up other topics more relevant to their own lives as well. See page 14 for a suggested role-playing activity.

Thanks to Advisory Board member ***Magali Duignan*** *for suggesting this topic.*

A call to the doctor's office

Receptionist: "Hello, this is South Street Medical Practice. Can I help you?"
Lisa: "Hello, I'd like to make an appointment for my husband. He needs to see a doctor."
Receptionist: "What are his symptoms?"
Lisa: "He has some pains in his chest."
Receptionist: "Has he had any previous heart problems?"
Lisa: "No, he hasn't."
Receptionist: "How long has he had these pains?"
Lisa: "About 2 days."
Receptionist: "Does he have trouble breathing?"
Lisa: "No, his breathing is fine."
Receptionist: "Who is his regular doctor?"
Lisa: "He usually sees Dr. Garnet."
Receptionist: "Dr. Garnet is on vacation this week, but Dr. Stone can see him at 3:15 today. Would that be all right?"
Lisa: "Yes, that's fine. Thank you."
Receptionist: "What is your husband's name, please?"
Lisa: "Ricardo Enfermo."
Receptionist: "Thank you. Okay, we'll see you at 3:15 then."
Lisa: "Yes, thanks."

Discussion:

1. What symptoms do SARS patients have?
2. What are the symptoms of West Nile virus?
3. What symptoms do you get if you have a cold?
4. What are the symptoms of food poisoning?
5. How do you know if you have heart problems?
6. What are the symptoms of depression?
7. How do you know if your child has chicken pox?
8. Do you know anyone who has arthritis? What symptoms do they have?

Multi-level crossword puzzle: What are your symptoms?

To the instructor:

On the next three pages are three puzzles on the ever-fascinating topic of people's symptoms. The symptoms are provided in the context of 10 anecdotes. These anecdotes are the same for each puzzle, but the missing words are different.

So, if there is a lot of unfamiliar vocabulary for your students, they can start with Level A. At this level, they should be able to understand the story well enough to identify the problem and learn the new vocabulary as they read. Next they can try out the new vocabulary by attempting the puzzle at higher levels.

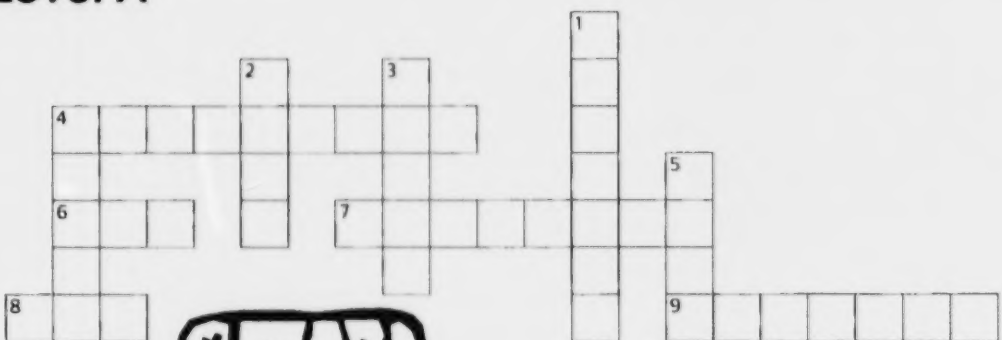
The puzzles and the reading/discussion activity above are good preparation for a role-playing activity—see page 14.

Multi-level crossword puzzle:
What are your symptoms?

Symptoms—Level A

Word list

cut
dentist
difficult
doctor
head
hot
medicine
outside
sick
sleep



Across clues

4. My father has arthritis. His back and his knees hurt. He has aching joints. It's _____ for him to move. Sometimes the pain is bad. He says it's because he's getting old.

6. "On Saturday my daughter fell down and _____ her chin." "What did you do?" "I was worried because it was bleeding a lot, so I took her to the emergency room." "Did she need stitches?" "No, the doctor said it would heal okay with a special bandage."

7. "My husband can't sleep at night. He coughs all night. His chest is congested and it hurts when he breathes." "Maybe he should go to the doctor." "We went to the doctor today. They took an X-ray, and they said his lungs look okay. The doctor said he has bronchitis. He's taking some _____ now." "I hope he feels better soon."

8. Husband: "Are you still feeling sick? Your head feels _____ . Maybe you have a fever."
Wife: "I just took my temperature. The thermometer says 99 degrees Fahrenheit, so it's almost normal."
Husband: I think you should rest today. I will cook dinner for you."

9. "I'm worried about one of my teeth." "Do you have a toothache?" "Not really, but it hurts when I eat or drink something very cold. That tooth is really sensitive to cold." "Maybe you have a cavity. You should see the _____ ."

Down clues

1. My friend Abbie has very bad allergies. In the winter she is fine. But in the spring she sneezes when she goes _____ . Her eyes get red and itchy. Her nose is runny. She is allergic to tree pollen and other things. If she stays inside with the air conditioner on, the symptoms are better.

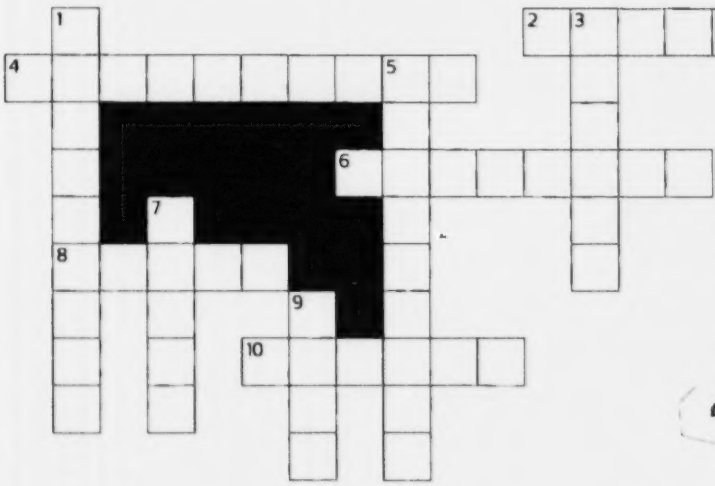
2. "My son says he feels very _____ to his stomach. He has been nauseous all day." "Has he been vomiting?" "No, he didn't throw up yet but he feels really sick." "You should check to see if his abdomen is tender. He might have appendicitis." "That's good advice, thanks."

3. "Last night I started getting a sore throat. It hurts when I talk or eat something. Today I feel worse. I think I'm coming down with a cold." "Are you coming to English class?" "No, I think I should go to bed. I'm very tired and I need to _____ ."

4. "I'm worried about my mother. She says she can't sleep at night." "Has she had insomnia before?" "No, this started just a few weeks ago. I told her to see the _____ but she doesn't want to go."

5. "Hi, I'd like to make an appointment with Dr. Mica." "Sure. And what is it about?" "I have bad headaches almost every day." "How long have you had them?" "About three weeks." "Where is the pain?" "Usually in the front of my _____ . My forehead hurts and sometimes my nose and cheekbones hurt." "Okay, we can give you an appointment on Friday."

Symptoms—Level B



Word list

aching
allergies
bleeding
cavity
congested
fever
nauseous
pain
sleep
sore throat

Across clues

2. "My son says he feels very sick to his stomach. He has been _____ all day." "Has he been vomiting?" "No, he didn't throw up yet but he feels really sick." "You should check to see if his abdomen is tender. He might have appendicitis." "That's good advice, thanks."

4. "Last night I started getting a _____ . It hurts when I talk or eat something. Today I feel worse. I think I'm coming down with a cold." "Are you coming to English class?" "No, I think I should go to bed. I'm very tired and I need to sleep."

6. "On Saturday my daughter fell down and cut her chin." "What did you do?" "I was worried because it was _____ a lot, so I took her to the emergency room." "Did she need stitches?" "No, the doctor said it would heal okay with a special bandage."

8. "I'm worried about my mother. She says she can't _____ at night." "Has she had insomnia before?" "No, this started just a few weeks ago. I told her to see the doctor but she doesn't want to go."

10. "I'm worried about one of my teeth." "Do you have a toothache?" "Not really, but it hurts when I eat or drink something very cold. That tooth is really sensitive to cold." "Maybe you have a _____ . You should see the dentist."

Down clues

1. "My husband can't sleep at night. He coughs all night. His chest is _____ and it hurts when he breathes." "Maybe he should go to the doctor." "We went to the doctor today. They took an X-ray, and they said his lungs look okay. The doctor said he has bronchitis. He's taking some medicine now." "I hope he feels better soon."

3. My father has arthritis. His back and his knees hurt. He has _____ joints. It's difficult for him to move. Sometimes the pain is bad. He says it's because he's getting old.

5. My friend Abbie has very bad _____ . In the winter she is fine. But in the spring she sneezes when she goes outside. Her eyes get red and itchy. Her nose is runny. She is allergic to tree pollen and other things. If she stays inside with the air conditioner on, the symptoms are better.

7. Husband: "Are you still feeling sick? Your head feels hot. Maybe you have a _____ ."
Wife: "I just took my temperature. The thermometer says 99 degrees Fahrenheit, so it's almost normal."
Husband: I think you should rest today. I will cook dinner for you."

9. "Hi, I'd like to make an appointment with Dr. Mica." "Sure. And what is it about?" "I have bad headaches almost every day." "How long have you had them?" "About three weeks." "Where is the _____ ?" "Usually in the front of my head. My forehead hurts and sometimes my nose and cheekbones hurt." "Okay, we can give you an appointment on Friday."

Symptoms—Level C

Word list

arthritis
bronchitis
coming down
headaches
insomnia
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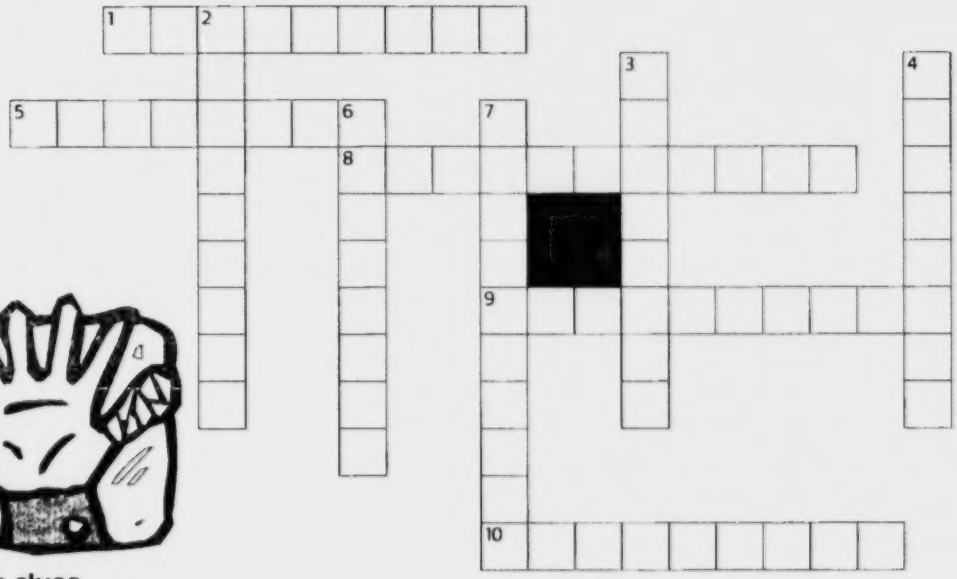
stitches
symptoms
thermometer
vomiting



Across clues

1. "Hi, I'd like to make an appointment with Dr. Mica." "Sure. And what is it about?" "I have bad _____ almost every day." "How long have you had them?" "About three weeks." "Where is the pain?" "Usually in the front of my head. My forehead hurts and sometimes my nose and cheekbones hurt." "Okay, we can give you an appointment on Friday."

5. My friend Abbie has very bad allergies. In the winter she is fine. But in the spring she sneezes when she goes outside. Her eyes get red and itchy. Her nose is runny. She is allergic to tree pollen and other things. If she stays inside with the air conditioner on, the _____ are better.

8. Husband: "Are you still feeling sick? Your head feels hot. Maybe you have a fever."
Wife: "I just took my temperature. The _____ says 99 degrees Fahrenheit, so it's almost normal."
Husband: I think you should rest today. I will cook dinner for you."

9. "Last night I started getting a sore throat. It hurts when I talk or eat something. Today I feel worse. I think I'm _____ with a cold." "Are you coming to English class?" "No, I think I should go to bed. I'm very tired and I need to sleep."

10. "I'm worried about one of my teeth." "Do you have a toothache?" "Not really, but it hurts when I eat or drink something very cold. That tooth is really _____ to cold." "Maybe you have a cavity. You should see the dentist."

Down clues

2. My father has _____ . His back and his knees hurt. He has aching joints. It's difficult for him to move. Sometimes the pain is bad. He says it's because he's getting old.

3. "My son says he feels very sick to his stomach. He has been nauseous all day". "Has he been _____ ?" "No, he didn't throw up yet but he feels really sick." "You should check to see if his abdomen is tender. He might have appendicitis." "That's good advice, thanks."

4. "I'm worried about my mother. She says she can't sleep at night." "Has she had _____ before?" "No, this started just a few weeks ago. I told her to see the doctor but she doesn't want to go."

6. "On Saturday my daughter fell down and cut her chin." "What did you do?" "I was worried because it was bleeding a lot, so I took her to the emergency room." "Did she need _____?" "No, the doctor said it would heal okay with a special bandage."

7. "My husband can't sleep at night. He coughs all night. His chest is congested and it hurts when he breathes." "Maybe he should go to the doctor." "We went to the doctor today. They took an X-ray, and they said his lungs look okay. The doctor said he has _____ . He's taking some medicine now." "I hope he feels better soon."

Conversation activity:
"I've had this cough for 3 days."

Here's a role-playing activity the students can have fun with while gaining some skills for dealing with a serious issue—communicating about health problems. To prepare for this activity, have the students read the phone conversation on page 11 and discuss what other questions a doctor or nurse might ask.

Preliminary meetings

Divide the class into two groups—nurses and patients. The "nurses" will work on a list of questions that are important to ask patients. When they have completed a list, each nurse should copy it so that they all have the questions available.

The "patients" will each choose an ailment from those on the cards below, or they can invent their own. Each patient should generate a list of symptoms and write these down; also a history of their symptoms. This may require some help from you for vocabulary, or they can work together on this if they wish.

To help get everybody in the mood, bring some gauze for the patients to use as bandages. If you don't have this, just use some paper towels folded into strips and some tape.

Patient intake

Now set up the room so that the nurses each have their own station. Ask the patients to report for their doctor's appointment—each patient will sit with a nurse and be interviewed. If the students need additional practice, have the patients report to another office and repeat the interview with a different nurse. Or, the students may wish to swap roles at this point.

Follow-up can include roleplays in front of the whole class, generating a list of symptoms for everybody's reference, compiling a list of questions a doctor might ask you, and a written description of the imaginary medical problem for homework.

My hand is bleeding.	I can't move my wrist.	I can't sleep at night.
I have chest pains.	My foot hurts.	I have pain in one ear.
I can't bend my knee.	My head is bleeding.	I have a red rash on my hands.
I have a bad cough.	I think I have a fever.	All of my joints hurt.
I have a stomachache.	I have pain in one arm.	I can't stop sneezing.
My nose hurts.	I have pain in one toe.	My neck hurts.

More medical activities?

Hands-on English has some other activities on health topics in previous issues. For a multi-level puzzle on **Going to the hospital**, plus two vocabulary exercises, see Vol. 8, No. 1. For a three-level puzzle on **Parts of the body** plus a fun vocabulary lesson, see Vol. 2, No. 6. There was also a multi-level puzzle called **About nutrition** in Vol. 7, No. 3. A multi-level dictation about **health care costs** in general appeared in Vol. 3, No. 4. And finally, another multi-level dictation on **Exercise and good health** appeared in Vol. 12, No. 5.

Do you have suggestions for other health-related activitities? We'd love to hear from you.

Multi-level dictation:
Traffic hazard—summer heat!

In northern parts of the U.S. summertime usually brings lots of road construction! This can create traffic problems. Some inexperienced drivers don't realize how easily their car can overheat, so we bring you this story for discussion with your students.

This story is quite a bit longer than our usual dictations. If you'd like to make the lesson shorter, do some cutting and pasting and give the students only the last two paragraphs to fill in. (You can add the complete first paragraph from the text below.)

Preparation

Make an enlargement on your copier of each of the levels, A, B, C and D. This makes the spaces easier to write in. Then make copies of these for your students, with plenty of extras in case they wish to try the dictation again at a different level.

Before reading the story together, talk about any road construction you've seen in the area. What problems does this create? If your students drive, do they take alternate routes? Also, what can you do to prepare for driving in hot weather? Does everyone know how to identify the radiator in their car?

Read and discuss the story, then have each student select the level they'd like to try. Read the passage aloud at natural speed, allowing time between sentences so students can write. Repeat the passage as often as the students wish.

Once finished, the students can help each other to correct these dictations. Lower level students become the "experts," since they have the more complete text!

Here is the full text for reading and dictation. It is 21 sentences (163 words) long.

Important words:

Car, engine, hood, (radiator), coolant, air conditioner.

Traffic, highway, road construction, wait, start to move.

A car problem

Yesterday around 4:00 I was driving home from work. My sister was with me. There was a lot of traffic. There was road construction on the highway, so we had to wait a long time. The weather was very hot. My car has air conditioning, so we were cool inside the car.

After a long time, the traffic started to move. But I had a problem! The engine stopped and I couldn't drive the car. Two men behind us came to help. We pushed the car to the side of the road. They opened the hood. "It's overheated," said one man. "You have to wait until it cools."

After 30 minutes the man put some water and some coolant in my car. Then it started. "Thank you very much," I said. "Can I pay you?" "That's okay," he said. "But take my advice—next time turn off your air conditioner if you have to wait in traffic." He and his friend drove away.

Discussion

What do you think about the man who stopped to help?
Has something like this happened to you?
What can you do to be prepared for car trouble?

Level A—A car problem

Yesterday around _____ I was driving home from _____ . My _____ was with me. There _____ a lot of traffic. There _____ road construction on _____ highway, so we had to wait a long _____ . The weather was very _____ . My _____ has air conditioning, so _____ were cool inside _____ _____ .

After a _____ time, the traffic started ____ move. But _____ had a problem! The engine stopped and I couldn't _____ the car. Two _____ behind us came to _____ . We pushed _____ _____ to the side of the _____ . They opened _____ hood. "It's overheated," said one _____ . "You have to _____ until it cools."

After _____ minutes the man put some _____ and some coolant in _____ car. Then it started. "Thank _____ very much," I said. "Can I pay _____ ?" "That's okay," _____ said. "But take my advice—next time turn _____ your air conditioner if you have to _____ in traffic." He and his _____ drove away.

Level B—A car problem

_____ around 4:00 I _____ _____ _____ from work. My sister _____ _____ _____ . There was _____ _____ ____ traffic. There was road construction _____ _____ _____ , so we had to wait _____ _____ _____ . The weather _____ _____ _____ . My _____ _____ air conditioning, so _____ _____ _____ inside the car.

_____ a long time, the traffic _____ _____ _____ . But I had ____ _____ ! The engine _____ and I _____ _____ the car. _____ men behind us _____ ____ _____ . _____ pushed _____ _____ to the side _____ _____ _____ . They _____ the hood. "It's overheated," _____ _____ _____. "You _____ _____ wait until ____ cools."

After 30 _____ the man _____ _____ _____ and some coolant _____ _____ _____ . Then it _____ . "Thank you _____ _____ ," I said. "_____ ____ pay you?" "That's _____ ," he said. "But _____ my advice—_____ _____ turn off _____ _____ conditioner _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ in traffic." He _____ _____ _____ drove away.

Level C—A car problem

_____ _____ 4:00 _____ _____ _____ _____ home _____ _____ .
_____ sister _____ _____ _____ . There _____ a _____ _____ _____ . _____
_____ _____ construction _____ _____ _____ , so we _____ _____ _____ a
_____ _____ . The _____ _____ _____ _____ . My _____ _____ _____
_____ _____ , so _____ _____ cool _____ _____ _____ .

After _____ _____ _____ , _____ _____ _____ _____ move. But _____
_____ _____ _____ ! _____ engine _____ and _____ _____ _____
_____ _____ . Two men _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ . We _____
_____ _____ to _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ . _____ _____ _____
hood. "_____ overheated," _____ _____ _____ . "_____ _____ _____ _____
_____ it cools."

_____ _____ _____ the man _____ _____ _____ and _____
_____ in my car. _____ _____ _____ . "_____ _____ very _____ ,"
I said. "_____ _____ _____ _____ ?" "_____ okay," he _____ . "But _____ _____
_____ —next time _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ if you _____
_____ _____ _____ _____ ." He _____ _____ _____ _____ away.

Level D—A car problem

_____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____
_____ _____ . _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ . _____ _____ _____
_____ _____ _____ . _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____
_____ , _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ . _____
_____ _____ _____ _____ . _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ , _____
_____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ .

_____ _____ _____ _____ , _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ .
_____ _____ _____ _____ _____ ! _____ _____ _____ _____ _____
_____ _____ _____ _____ . _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____
_____ . _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____
_____ . _____ _____ _____ _____ . "_____ _____ _____ ,"
_____ _____ _____ . "_____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ ."

_____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____
_____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ . _____ _____ _____ _____ .
"_____ _____ _____ _____ ," _____ _____ . "_____ _____ _____
_____ ?" "_____ _____ _____ ," _____ _____ . "_____ _____ _____ _____ —
_____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____
_____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ ." _____ _____ _____ _____ _____
_____ .

On the market

Reviews of useful ESL materials

Index Card Games for ESL, Third Edition, compiled by Raymond C. Clark (Pro Lingua Associates 2002). 106pp. ISBN 0-86647-158-8. Photocopyable.

Recently a reader told us that book reviews aren't of much interest to her right now, as their program's budget is so tight. Well, this is one of those books that for the cost of just one copy will give you years of supplemental teaching ideas. In fact, I have a previous edition of the book and I used techniques from it in just about every class I ever taught. This new edition is even more useful because the example games are more plentiful and they are in ready-to-copy format.

There are 7 types of games in this book, most of them intended for review of specific vocabulary or grammar forms the students have studied. For each game, there are suggestions for competitive team play, which can be a lot of fun, but all of the games are just as useful for quiet, contemplative work in pairs or small groups. When I was teaching beginning students, these focused activities were a calm, much needed break from the scary whole-group activities we did every day.

The games include: *Person, Place or Thing* (like "Twenty Questions") for vocabulary practice; *Matched Pairs* (like "Concentration") for vocabulary and also for practicing almost any grammar structure under the sun; *Sound and Spell* (grouping words according to their sound) for pronunciation practice and sound discrimination; *Scrambles*, which includes scrambled sentences for grammar focus (this is also a good beginning reading activity) and scrambled stories for a reading activity; *Categories* which is played like "Password" and really helps students learn to communicate in English; *Scenarios*, a lovely situation activity in which students get role cards and interact with the other students (for example at a family reunion); and *Pyramids*, which is a trivia-type question and answer game.

Each game includes not only pages and pages of ready-to-use examples at different levels, but also useful lists of other possible topics for preparing your own sets of games. The techniques, once you've got them down, provide you with ideas that you can use to enhance your other lesson materials. All of the games (except *Scenarios*) work very well in a tutoring environment also.

—Anna Silliman

New edition, more useful than ever! Order from Pro Lingua Associates, 1-800-366-4775 or www.ProLinguaAssociates.com

Practical Resources for Adult ESL, A Selection Guide to Materials for Adult ESL and ESL/ESOL Literacy by Anna Silliman and Abigail Tom (Alta Book Center Publishers 2000). 167pp. ISBN 1-882483-80-4.

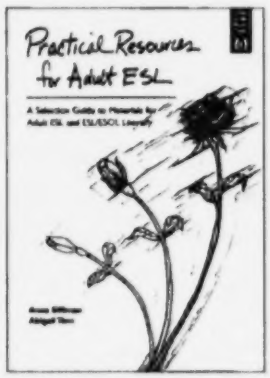
You might think it's a bit strange for an author to review her own book! So, let me say in advance that this might not be the most (ahem) unbiased critique you've ever read. Abbie and I wrote this book because we thought that our field (adult ESL) really needed an overview of what materials are available and what works best in the classroom.

The result, I hope, is a reference that can save you a lot of time in looking for resources. There are over 260 short reviews of ESL texts here, divided into categories such as Literacy, Speaking and Listening, Writing, Citizenship, etc. We looked at many, many books and selected just the ones that we ourselves either have used or would want to use for our own teaching. We've presented the material with teachers new to the field in mind, so there is plenty of explanation and lots of teaching ideas.

One criticism of our book is that it doesn't cover software—this is because neither Abbie nor I have much experience using software for ESL. Besides, the majority of our colleagues don't have access to computer labs for their students anyway. We know of some who don't even have overhead projectors yet! So, we tend to have a more low-tech outlook on teaching materials.

We hope this book will help you as a starting point as you're getting ready for your next teaching adventure. As always, we enjoy feedback so feel free to contact the authors!

—Anna Silliman



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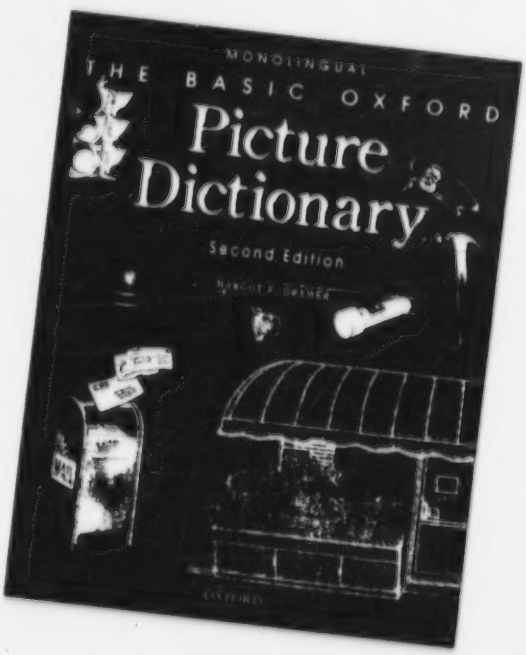

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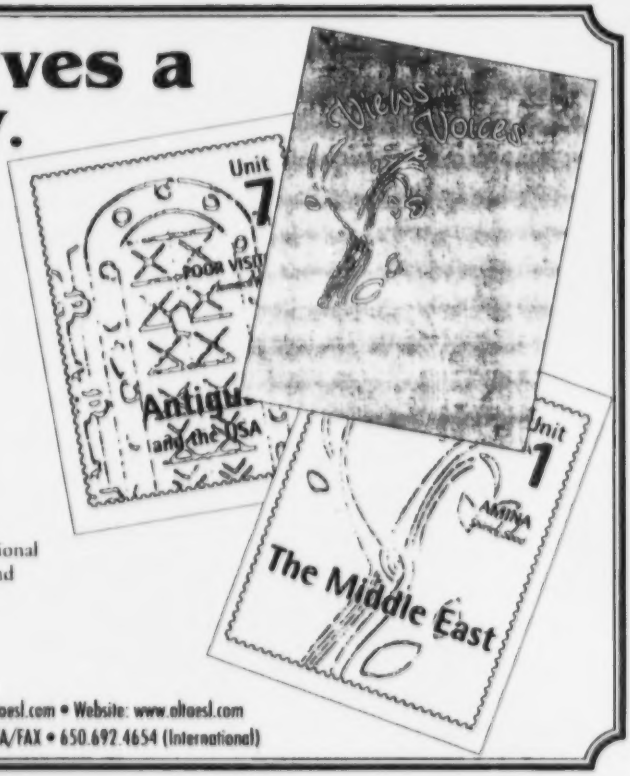

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News & notes

Ideas from past issues

Hot weather topics in past issues included: a multi-level crossword puzzle called "Summertime" about the various activities available in this season (Vol. 6, No. 1) and another puzzle called "Keeping cool in the summer" (in Vol. 9, No. 2)..

A popular pastime in summer is **going to the movies**, and if your students are interested in this, see Vol.11, No. 5 for the crossword puzzle "Going to the movies" and a guided conversation activity to help students give their own short movie reviews.

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Volume 13, Number 3 September/October 2003

Hands-on English

A periodical for teachers and tutors of adult English as a second language

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Learning about learning

Have you been a student yourself recently? There is no better way to discover what the learning process feels like and how to improve your teaching. For ESL instructors the best experience would be trying to learn a new language yourself. If you enroll in a language course, you'll immediately think of a thousand things that apply to your own teaching. But any kind of learning experience can help you focus on teaching issues.

Aerobics!

A very good example of learning about learning happened here just recently. Since the life of an editor can be pretty sedentary, after many years of desk work I've decided to make some changes. Like, getting more exercise than the usual stroll after dinner! A friend recommended 'step aerobics,' which sounded perfect, so I acquired a couple of videos and the right 'step' gizmo. Cheerfully I started up a tape to give it a try.

Thinking, "How hard can this be??" I started with an intermediate level session. Soon my smile started to fade and my delight with the new toy started to turn to frustration as I realized I couldn't keep up with the fancy footwork. I did try, but the words "klutz" and "idiot" come to mind to describe my efforts. It took about 7 minutes for my attitude to turn negative. I had way overestimated my abilities.

Fortunately for my aerobic career, I also had a beginning level video, so before quitting altogether I cued up the other tape. Aha! Here was a friendlier, more basic approach with instructions for a beginner, which I now had to admit I was. I succeeded in participating through the first segment, and felt victorious. I watched the last segments from the safety of the couch, but felt I would be ready to try again in a day or two.

Adults are competent

I suddenly realized that I'd just had a lesson in how we adults think about learning, which applies to our students as well. Here are some of the ideas this generated:

- We (adults) are used to feeling competent, and we really don't like to feel like idiots.
- We're embarrassed when we can't do something that looks like it should be easy.
- We tend to forget that something that *looks* easy can be difficult if you don't know how to do it and haven't practiced.
- We're eager to get right to the point and learn something useful, and we're impatient about starting with the basics.
- We're in a hurry to learn what we need to get the benefits we want.
- We are easily discouraged when we don't succeed. (As soon as we succeed though, we feel like winners.)
- When we don't succeed right away, we blame ourselves and our abilities rather than our lack of knowledge & experience.
- Our desire to keep working at something increases when we feel like we're making progress.

The best lesson

Trying to learn something new can be a humbling experience. There is a fine line between material that seems too easy (boring, pointless) and too hard (incomprehensible, discouraging). The best lesson is interesting and challenging but at a level where the student can still succeed. Just like aerobics instructors, we ESL teachers want to send our students from class pumped up, with the feeling "Yes, I can do this!" Fortunately though, we don't have to wear Spandex while we do it.

Happy teaching!—the Editor.

Hands-on English
Volume 13, Number 3
September/October 2003

Hands-on English (ISSN 1056-2680) is published six times a year (Jan./Feb., March/April, May/June, July/Aug., Sept./Oct., Nov./Dec) by Hands-on English, P.O. Box 256, Crete, Nebraska 68333 USA.
Printing by *The Printer* in Lincoln, NE.

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About the publication

We're in our second decade! *Hands-on English* has been helping teachers and tutors with practical teaching ideas since 1991. The editor is a former ESL teacher who has taught ESL to adults in many different settings, and is familiar with the fun and the challenges involved.

The articles and ideas in HOE come from experienced teachers and tutors, including our readers. If you have a lesson or teaching suggestion you would like to share, we welcome your input!

Who reads H.O.E.?

Our subscribers work with ESL students in a wide range of programs, including: Refugee programs, Literacy programs, Community colleges, Colleges and universities, Correctional facilities, Resource centers, **Adult Education programs**, Volunteer tutoring, Intensive ESL programs, Teacher training programs, Religious organizations, Worker's unions, Community Education programs, Secondary schools, Workplace education, Language institutes, Libraries . . .and more!

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Letters

. . .& cards, emails, calls, rumors, etc.

Recommended resource. . .

In our last issue, a reader listed intergenerational learning as one of the topics suggested for future HOE articles. We received this response:

"In answer to the question how parents can make their home a learning environment for kids, I recommend a small softback book entitled, "Your Home is a Learning Place" written by Pamela Weinberg and published by New Readers Press (www.newreaderspress.com). Also of interest by the same author is "You and Your Child's Teacher." I think your readers will find these publications of interest.

—Jacqueline Willis
Susquehanna Valley Adult Literacy Cooperative, Lewisburg, PA

. . .and a suggestion

In response to the same question about family learning, we received this response:

"It is my (humble) opinion that reading is where it's at. Even math requires reading ability, with story problems. Take the kids to the library and let them check out AT LEAST one book for their age for every day there is until you are required to return them. . . I used to carry books home from the library in a dishpan, and it was PACKED FULL! I read my boys the books until they were old enough to read themselves. After I read the books to them, they would voluntarily peruse them over and over, slowly turning the pages and remembering the stories, noticing every detail of the pictures. . . . They also saw us reading all the time. When the parents sit reading through the evening instead of watching TV, this tells the child that reading must be fun, as opposed to merely a requirement. After this early exposure to the written word, they both did well in school, and to this day, they both love to read."

—Linda Phipps
Midwest City, OK

If you help your students get familiar with the public library, this will benefit them and their families. For some ideas about library activities see HOE Vol. 9, No 3. —Editor.

An ESL legacy

"My mother. . .has been teaching ESL for many years and will be retiring after the summer, just when I am starting my own ESL career. She generously gave me one of her most precious resources—back issues of HOE! I was immediately able to use items from several issues and am sending my first subscription order. Thank you,"

—Heidi Sohn
Ventura, CA

Welcome to the field, Heidi! I think it's wonderful that Hands-on English is being handed down from one generation to the next. You're off to a great start. —Editor.

Encouragement

"Keep on doing what you're doing! You are the *best*!"

—Marsha D. Kennedy
Pittsburgh, PA

"I love HOE! Thanks for all you do."

—Pilar Laugel
Washington, D.C.

You encouragement keeps me going, thank you! —Editor.

How about a 'landlord' topic?

"I wonder if you have plans for an issue targeting stories of ESL learners and their landlords/housing issues. . .it's often on learners' lists of concerns/uncomfortable zones."

—Holly Dilatush
Charlottesville, VA

What a great idea! Can our readers help with some suggestions for lessons on this topic? What kinds of questions or problems come up for your students? What things do they need to know in order to get along appropriately with the landlord? How can they find out about their rights and obligations? Any input or experiences you can relate will be helpful. Thank you! —Editor.

Hints & tips

Art and ESL

Linda Holden in Gurnee, Illinois writes to us with the suggestion of using paintings as a language stimulus for ESL. For example, paintings by Grandma Moses, Norman Rockwell, Edward Hopper, and other realistic painters provide a visual basis for discussing and writing about life and culture. Linda points us toward a lovely article, entitled "Grandma Moses Meets ESL: Art for Speaking and Writing Activities" by Claudia J. Rucinski-Hatch. This article was published in the *Journal of the Imagination in Language Learning* and is available online at http://www.njcu.edu/cill/journal-index.html (click on Volume III).

Thanks to Linda for letting us know about this article! We think you'll find inspiration and good ideas there for some great lessons.—Editor.

More about learning names

In our last issue, we had an article about techniques that help you learn the students' names. Linda Phipps writes with some further tips:

"I use one trick that is helpful to me and the students. Each time a student enrolls in class, I make a tiny card with his/her name on it. I toss these in a CD case and as we go through each class, I continually draw out the next name card whenever I want someone to read the next paragraph or answer the next question, etc. Then I toss that card in the case lid. We go through the entire pile of name cards several times during each class; I just keep flipping it over and starting again.

"You don't have to be able to match a face with a name, and it doesn't matter where they are sitting either. You just call the name, and wherever they are, they read or answer the question. Gradually as a few weeks go by, everyone has heard everyone's name read and noticed who answered and can now put the two together (including me!) Everyone gets called on during the class, but no one really knows in what order you will call on them. If you just go around the table calling on students, they are mentally preparing for their next question (or pre-reading 'their' paragraph) while the student right before them is 'on,' instead of paying attention. This system eliminates that pressure.

"If I have a particularly difficult question and draw the card of a lower-level student, I can easily lay that card aside until I come to an easier question and draw a different name card for now. That way, I can somewhat assure that each student has some success and isn't embarrassed."

End-of-class actvity

"Here is something I have recently started to do at the end of every class session.

"About 15 minutes before dismissal we write a class log. I ask the students for the day and date, weather, the number of students, the work we did, and write it on the board. It looks something like this:

Day and Date	Weather	# of Students	Our Work
Thursday, June 11, 2003	Sunny warm	23	pronunciation—final s Calling the doctor's office go goes have has do does

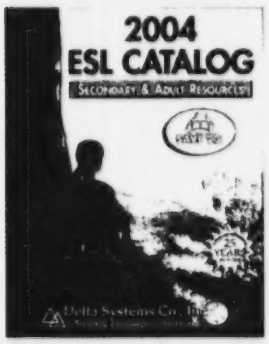
"Once the students become familiar with the routine, I had a student with good handwriting get the headings and information from the class and write it on the board. In fact, during one June session when I was still individually testing a student, one of my students spontaneously went up to the board and did this!"

—Carol Weinstein
New York, NY

Do you have some favorite hints, tips or tricks that work for you? Why not share them with our readers?! The best teaching suggestions come directly from our readers.

On the market:
Catalog roundup

Two catalogs you definitely want on your shelf—Delta's and Alta's—include books and materials from many publishers as well as their own publications:



Delta Systems Co. can be found on the web at www.delta-systems.com

Alta Book Center Publishers is on the web at www.altaesl.com.

Where to get ESL materials

Teachers who work with adult ESL students typically have students with widely varying needs and levels; as a result they are constantly searching for just the right materials. Many of the calls we get here at *Hands-on English* are questions about materials and where to find them!

The best suggestion we have is to get on catalog mailing lists for ESL book publishers. Once you've rounded up a collection of these you have a great resource for browsing and a good start in finding out what's available. We've listed here the names and web addresses for some of the most relevant companies as a starting point. So, round 'em up and head 'em out! (Yippee!)

First on the list

Start by getting catalogs from the two biggest ESL distributors, Alta and Delta (see info at left). Each of these companies is also a publisher in its own right. With these as your resource you'll have a wide range of materials to consider, for every level, age group and need.

More ESL publishers

Here are some more ESL publishers whose materials may be of interest to you, and whose catalog might be helpful. (Check each company's website to request a catalog.)

- Cambridge University Press
  <http://us.cambridge.org/esl/>
  Look at their professional titles (teacher resources) and listening texts especially; dictionaries also.

- Full Blast Productions
  <www.fullblastproductions.com>
  Look here for puzzle books, reproducible readers on culture topics, conversation books.

- Heinle & Heinle Publishers
  <www.heinle.com/esl_d/>
  Look at their reading materials for all levels but especially for advanced or pre-academic students.

- Houghton Mifflin Co.
  <http://college.hmco.com/esl/instructors/>
  Look here for academic and pre-academic skills texts; many reading texts.

- Linmore Publishing, Inc.
  <www.linmore.com>
  Look at their literacy-level texts and student-based stories for easy reading; basic level ESL instruction.

- Longman ESL
  <http://www.longman.com/ae/ushome/>
  Look at their very useful grammar texts; core textbooks and a variety of useful older ESL favorites.

- New Readers Press
  <www.newreaderspress.com>
  Look at their workplace and citizenship materials for low levels; family literacy, tutoring and basic ESL instruction.

- Oxford University Press
  <www.oup-usa.org/esl>
  Look at their picture dictionaries and literacy materials; wide selection of topical readers; teacher resources.

- Pro Lingua Associates
  <www.ProLinguaAssociates.com>
  Look here for activity books, practical materials and many copyable resources.

- Steck-Vaughn
  <www.steck-vaughn.com>
  (Click on the "Adult Education" section, then select "ESL"). They publish a well-designed workplace series and citizenship materials.

- TESOL, Inc.
  <www.tesol.org>
  (Click on "Publications") Look here for career resources, program guidelines & standards, professional information as well as activities books.

- University of Michigan Press
  <www.press.umich.edu/esl>
  Look here for higher level academic prep texts, basic pronunciation resources, teacher training titles.

More?

Of course there are many more publishers with excellent and useful ESL materials. You can find many of these through the internet. For example, if you go to Dave's ESL Cafe, <http://eslcafe.com/search/Publishers/index.html> you'll find a list with web links to more than 60 publishers.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Grammar grab-bag:

"The power went out but we are fine."

Combining sentences with 'but'

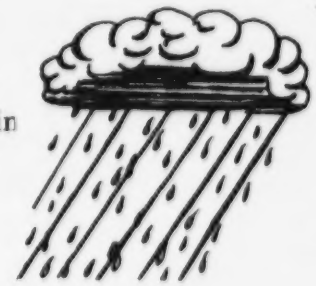
Beginning level students have to speak in short, simple sentences. Usually their lessons consist of short, simple sentences as well. In order to move into a more natural-sounding level of English, they need to learn to use conjunctions. You can give them specific practice in this skill with very satisfying results. Students enjoy learning to make more sophisticated-sounding sentences in English.

If your students are beginners, you can first introduce the topic of hurricanes to get familiar with the vocabulary. Discuss what students already know about the problems related to hurricanes.

Read the worksheet with the students and give them an example or two of combining the sentences, using *but*. Then have the students try the rest of the examples on their own. Point out that the subject doesn't need to be repeated twice, and can be replaced by a pronoun (i.e., 'My mother lives nearby but she...'). Follow up by reading the answers aloud.

If the students are confident enough, try the same exercise with *although*, and then with *however*. For homework, have them write all the sentences as a story, using the three conjunctions *but*, *although* and *however*.

After the storm



Did you hear about the big hurricane? I have a friend who lives in the area where the hurricane hit. After the storm, I called her on the phone. I had many questions to ask her!

1. Was your house damaged in the hurricane?

(The hurricane damaged many houses. My house is still okay.)

Answer:

_____

2. Did you lose power?

(The power went out. The power was out for only a short time.)

Answer:

_____

3. Is the water okay to drink?

(The water is probably okay. It's a good idea to boil the water.)

Answer:

_____

4. Did you have candles in the house?

(We didn't have any candles. My husband bought some candles right before the storm.)

Answer:

_____

5. Did any relatives stay with you?

(My mother lives nearby. My mother stayed in her own house during the hurricane.)

Answer:

_____

6. Was there any flooding near you?

(There was a lot of water in the streets. The water went down after one day.)

Answer:

_____

7. Did you lose phone service?

(The phone in the house didn't work. My cell phone worked.)

Answer:

_____

8. Is everyone in your family okay?

(My brother's car was damaged. Nobody was injured.)

Answer:

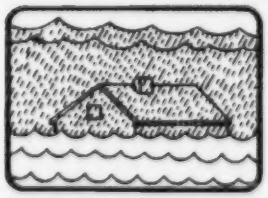
_____

9. Was your school closed?

(We had school in the morning before the storm. We didn't have school in the afternoon.)

Answer:

_____



10. Did a lot of trees fall down?

(Many trees in the city fell down. No trees fell near my house.)

Answer:

_____

Tools & techniques:
Getting to know you

A beanbag game for speaking and listening

This activity is appropriate for all levels, and is especially appropriate for beginners. It is most suitable for a first class as a way of relaxing students, getting them to talk about themselves, and setting the pace with a student-centered activity. It is most effective and fun with 8–16 students.

Preparation

You'll need a beanbag, or some kind of squishy ball that is easy to toss and catch. It helps if this is a bright color. For lower-level students you might also want to prepare some hint cards (see below).

Description

Students stand in a circle. The instructor begins with, "My name is..." and then tosses the beanbag to a student. The student responds with, "My name is..." and tosses the beanbag to another student. Once all the names have been established (and the beanbag is returned to the instructor), and students understand what is going to happen, try some other topics, such as occupation ("I am a teacher"), nationality, what languages you speak, etc.

Next a variety of language items can be introduced. The instructor can try, "I have a dog." Sooner or later it will reach a student who does not have a pet. At this point, some variety can be introduced, whereby the student says anything that he/she would like to say about him/herself.

Slowly, the activity will shift from the student just copying the previous students' comments to students introducing something they would like say about themselves.

For weaker groups

Hint cards can be prepared for weaker classes outlining some of the things that they may want to say about themselves. e.g. I am from..., I have a..., I am interested in..., I like..., etc. You could also write these hints on the board for students to use as cues.

Why it works

The use of the beanbag ensures that students do not know who will be called upon next, thus encouraging them to focus on listening to the previous student's comment. In addition to being fun, the toss and catch activity helps to encourage students to look at the speaker.

Variation

You can turn this into a more challenging memory game by having each player repeat first what the previous speaker said, before making their own statement. For example, "His name is Peter. My name is Toshio." The next person to get the beanbag will say, "His name is Toshio. My name is..." and so on. You can use this variation with the other topics as well. For example, "He likes swimming. I like football." Playing the game this way generates extremely attentive listening!

—by **Peter Lutes**, Senior Instructor at Mitsui Engineering & Shipbuilding Co., Ltd., and Lecturer at Kagawa National University, Japan.

Conversation activity:

Questionnaire about speaking English

1. Which is easier for you, writing English or speaking English? Why?

2. Which is easier for you, listening to English or reading in English? Why?

3. How difficult is it to understand:

	very easy,	OK,	difficult,	very difficult
The teacher	1	2	3	4
The other students	1	2	3	4
People at work	1	2	3	4
Other Americans	1	2	3	4
TV news report	1	2	3	4
TV entertainment	1	2	3	4
The radio	1	2	3	4
The telephone	1	2	3	4

4. Do you speak English outside of class? If yes, where?

5. What English words are most difficult to pronounce? Why?

6. When you speak with Americans, can they understand you?

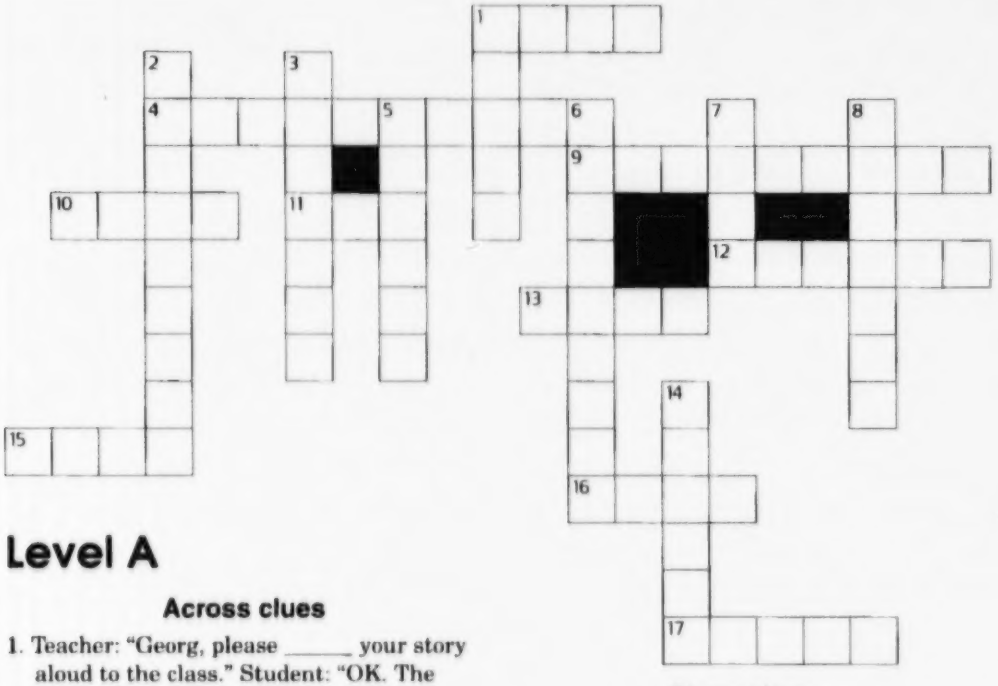
7. What do you do, if someone doesn't understand you?

Note to the instructor: The questions on this page will help to open up a discussion about English speaking and listening skills. This is a good introduction to the vocabulary in the multi-level puzzle on the next page.

You can use this questionnaire in a couple of ways. One is to have the students conduct interviews in pairs or small groups. When they do this, they can compare answers with their partner. Another way to do it is to have the students write their answers on the questionnaire individually first, then discuss the answers together as a group.

To do the puzzle (pages 10–12), bring extra copies so that students can try the puzzle at each level if they wish. Level A is the easiest, and the clues are the same as in Level B. Level C is a bit harder and would make a good review for students who have succeeded with the other two puzzles. Supply the word lists only if students are having trouble and need a hint.

Multi-level crossword puzzle:
Speaking English



Word list

didn't
different
fast
hear
interview
lips
listen
listens
message
questions
read
reads
say
saying
talk
talked
tell
understand

Level A

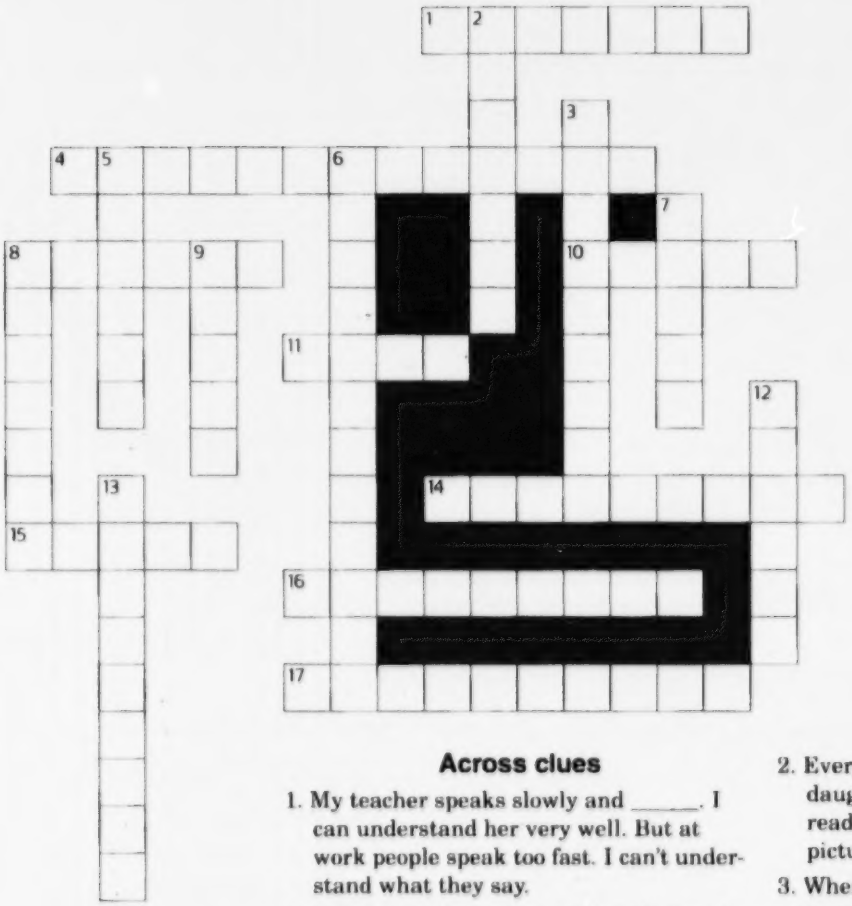
Across clues

1. Teacher: "Georg, please _____ your story aloud to the class." Student: "OK. The title is 'My trip to California.' "
4. Can you explain what you mean? I don't _____."
9. Student 1: "I went to my job _____ today." Student 2: "Did they ask you a lot of questions?" Student 1: "Yes, but it wasn't difficult."
10. My teacher speaks slowly and clearly. I can understand her very well. But at work, people speak too ____. I can't understand what they say.
11. When you ____ a vowel sound, like *a* or *e*, usually your mouth is open.
12. The teacher reads some sentences to the class. The students _____ and write. This is a dictation.
13. Can you repeat that please? I didn't _____ you.
15. When you say a consonant sound, like *m* or *t*, you use your _____ and tongue.
16. It's difficult for me to ____ on the telephone. I can't understand what people are saying.
17. I learned English grammar, reading and writing in my country . But I _____ learn spoken English until I came here.

Down clues

1. Every night, Tran ____ a story to her daughter. Her daughter is too young to read but she listens and looks at the pictures.
2. Tomorrow I have to give a report about my country to the ESL class. The students will listen and ask _____.
3. I called the school yesterday and got the answering machine, but I couldn't understand the _____.
5. Sometimes Americans don't understand what I'm _____. I have trouble with pronunciation.
6. British, Canadian and American English are very similar in writing, but they sound a little _____.
7. Teacher: "_____ me the story about how you came to this country." Student: "It's a long story." Teacher: "That's okay, I would like to hear it."
8. Maria brings her tape recorder to ESL class every day. She records the class. At home she _____ to the tape again.
14. When I first came to this country I met with a tutor twice a week for conversation practice. We _____ about many things.

Speaking English, Level B

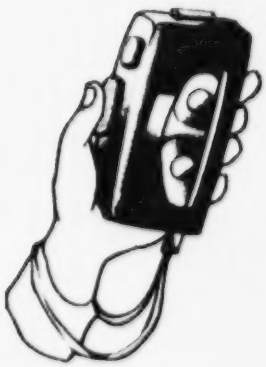


Word list

aloud
clearly
consonant
conversation
dictation
difficult
listens
mean
pronunciation
questions
records
repeat
report
sound
spoken
story
understand
vowel

Across clues

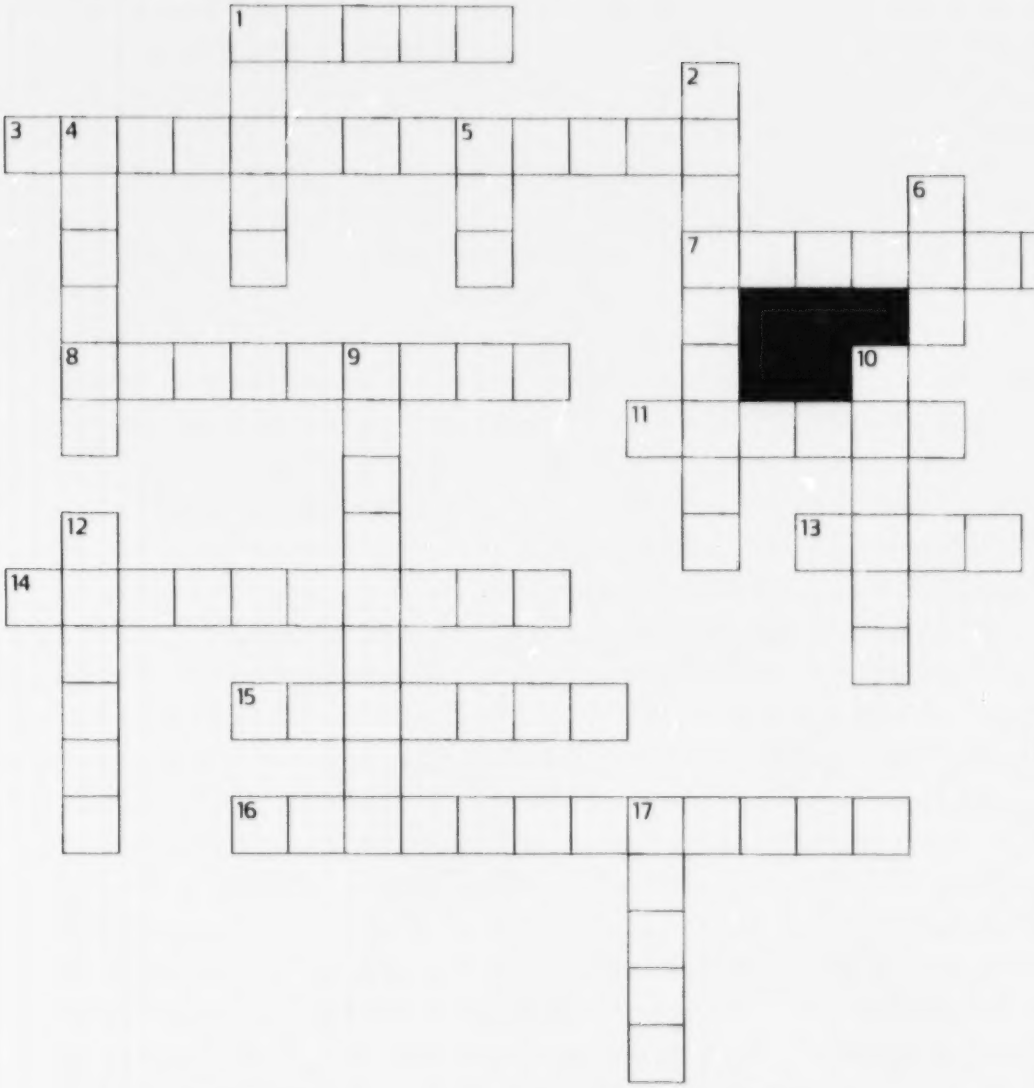
1. My teacher speaks slowly and _____. I can understand her very well. But at work people speak too fast. I can't understand what they say.
4. Sometimes Americans don't understand what I'm saying. I have trouble with _____.
8. Can you _____ that, please? I didn't hear you.
10. Teacher: Tell me the _____ about how you came to this country." Student: It's a long story." Teacher: "That's okay."
11. Can you explain what you _____? I don't understand.
14. The teacher reads some sentences to the class. The students listen and write. This is a _____.
15. British, Canadian and American English are very similar in writing, but they _____ a little different.
16. It's _____ for me to talk on the telephone. I can't understand what people are saying.
17. I called the school yesterday and got the answering machine, but I couldn't _____ the message.



Down clues

2. Every night Tran reads a story to her daughter. Her daughter is too young to read but she _____ and looks at the pictures.
3. When you say a _____ sound, you use your lips and tongue.
5. Tomorrow I have to give a _____ about my country to the ESL class. The students will listen and ask questions.
6. When I first came to this country I met with a tutor twice a week for _____ practice. We talked about a lot of things.
7. When you say a _____ sound, usually your mouth is open.
8. Maria brings her tape recorder to ESL class every day. She _____ the class. At home she listens to the tape again.
9. Teacher: "Georg, please read your story _____ to the class." Student: "OK. The title is 'My trip to California.' "
12. I learned English grammar, reading and writing in my country . But I didn't learn _____ English until I came here.
13. Student 1: "I went to my job interview today." Student 2: "Did they ask you a lot of _____ ?" Student 1: "Yes, but it wasn't difficult."

Speaking English—Level C



Word list

aloud
ask
consonants
conversation
dictation
explain
hear
interview
listen
pronunciation
quickly
recording
repeat
report
say
sound
speak
vowels

Across clues

1. How many languages do you _____?
3. Good _____ means making the sounds correctly.
7. Tell me what you mean.
8. You can listen to a _____ on tape many times.
11. Be quiet and _____ to what I'm saying.
13. Please speak louder, I can't _____ you.
14. The letters *n*, *m*, *l*, *s* and *z* are _____.
15. This word means *fast*.
16. A friendly talk with two or more people is a _____.

Down clues

1. The words *there*, *their* and *they're* _____ the same but have different meanings.
2. I heard a reporter _____ the President on the news.
4. I watched a _____ about September 11th on TV.
5. If you don't understand something, you should _____.
6. This word means *tell* or *speak*.
9. To do this, you listen and write in class.
10. Say it again.
12. The letters *a*, *e*, *i*, *o* and *u* are _____.
17. Read _____, opposite of *silently*.

Multi-level dictation:
Telemarketing calls

Literacy level?

You can adapt Level A so that literacy students can also succeed by giving them this word list to work from:

6:00, calling, card, dinner, man, minutes, month, name, no, number, phone, please, telephone, ten, thank, you, who.

We bring you this story for discussion with your students because it's a common experience in every household. Students need to gain some confidence about dealing with these calls in order to protect themselves.

This story is longer than our usual dictations. If you'd like to make the lesson shorter, do some cutting and pasting and give the students only the last two paragraphs to fill in. (You can add the complete first paragraph from the text below.)

Preparation

Make an enlargement on your copier of each of the levels, A, B, C and D. This makes the spaces easier to write in. Then make copies of these for your students, with plenty of extras in case they wish to try the dictation again at a different level. Level E, the most challenging, is on a blank sheet of paper!

Read and discuss the story. Talk about each of the three calls and whether they might be valid offers. How do you know? Find out if students know their rights (callers have to take you off their list if you request it; there's a "Do not call" service you can sign up for at www.donotcall.gov). Discuss the best way to handle these calls. Good advice includes not giving personal info over the phone (to strangers), and not buying anything offered to you over the phone. Find out if students know about "scams" and discuss some of these. What about charities? If you are interested in contributing the best advice is to ask for a mailing first. Unscrupulous persons usually will not mail out information.

Start to write

Read and discuss the story, then have each student select the level they'd like to try. Read the passage aloud at natural speed, allowing time between sentences so students can write. Repeat the passage as often as the students wish. Once finished, the students can help each other to correct these dictations. Lower level students become the "experts," since they have the more complete text!

Here is the full text for reading and dictation. It is 16 sentences (162 words) long.

Important words:

telephone, long distance, special rate, discount, credit card

call/calling, ring/rang, hang up/hung up, tell/told, say/said.

Telemarketing calls

I was cooking dinner last night at 6:00 p.m. The telephone rang. When I answered the phone, I heard no sound, then a click. Then a man said, "I'm calling to offer you a special rate on long distance service." I told him "No, thank you" and hung up.

Ten minutes later the telephone rang again. "Hello, how are you today?" a woman asked. I said, "Who is this?" She said "My name is Kathy Smith and I'm calling on behalf of Ventana Window Company. We are offering a 10 percent discount on new windows this month." I told her "No, thank you" and hung up.

Five minutes later, the telephone rang again. A man said "I'm calling from First Bank to tell you that you qualify for a Gold credit card. All you have to do is tell us your Social Security number and we'll send it to you." "No, thank you," I said, "And please don't call this number again."

Discussion

1. Have you had any phone calls like this? If so, what were they about? What did you do?
2. Why did these 3 calls come at dinner time?
3. Do you think this kind of call should be illegal? Why or why not?

Level A—Telemarketing calls

I was cooking _____ last night at _____ p.m. The telephone rang. When I answered the _____ , I heard no sound, then a click. Then a _____ said, "I'm calling to offer _____ a special rate on long distance service." I told him "No, _____ _____" and hung up.

_____ minutes later the _____ rang again. "Hello, how are _____ today?" a woman asked. I said, "_____ is this?" She said "My _____ is Kathy Smith and I'm _____ on behalf of Ventana Window Company. We are offering a _____ percent discount on new windows this _____ ." I told her "_____, thank _____" and hung up.

Five _____ later, the telephone rang again. A _____ said "I'm _____ from First Bank to tell you that you qualify for a gold credit _____ . All you have to do is tell us your Social Security _____ and we'll send it to you." "____ , _____ ____ ," I said, "And _____ don't call this number again."

Level C—Telemarketing calls

_____ _____ _____ dinner _____ _____ _____ _____ _____. The telephone _____ . _____ _____ _____ _____ phone, I heard _____ _____ , then a click. _____ _____ _____ _____ , "_____ _____ _____ _____ _____ a _____ _____ on _____ distance _____ ." _____ _____ _____ "No, thank you" and _____ _____ .

Ten minutes later _____ _____ _____ _____ . "_____ , how are you today?" _____ _____ _____ . I said, "Who is this?" _____ _____ "My name _____ Kathy Smith and _____ _____ on behalf of Ventana _____ _____ . _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ discount _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ ." I _____ _____ "No, thank you" _____ _____ _____ _____ .

Five minutes _____ , _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ . _____ _____ _____ "I'm calling _____ First Bank _____ _____ _____ that _____ _____ _____ _____ gold _____ _____ . All you have to do is _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ and _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ ." "No, thank you," _____ _____, "And please _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ ."

Level B—Telemarketing calls

I was _____ _____ last night _____ _____ _____. The _____ rang. When I _____ _____ _____, I heard _____ sound, then _____ click. Then _____ _____ _____, "I'm _____ _____ to offer _____ a special rate on _____ distance service." I _____ _____ "No, thank you" and hung _____.

_____ _____ _____ the telephone rang _____. "Hello, _____ _____ _____ _____?" a woman asked. I said, "_____ _____ _____?" She said "_____ _____ _____ Kathy Smith and _____ _____ _____ on behalf of Ventana Window _____. We are offering a _____ _____ discount on _____ windows _____ _____." I told her "_____, _____ _____" and _____ up.

_____ _____ _____, the telephone rang again. A man said "_____ _____ _____ First Bank to _____ _____ that you qualify for a _____ _____ _____. All you have to do is _____ _____ _____ Social Security number and we'll _____ _____ _____ _____." "No, _____ _____," I said, "And _____ _____ call _____ _____ again."

Level D—Telemarketing calls

_____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____. _____ _____ _____ _____. _____ _____ _____ _____ _____, _____ _____ _____ _____, _____ _____ _____. _____ _____ _____, "_____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____." _____ _____ _____ "_____, _____" _____ _____ _____.

_____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____. "_____, _____ _____ _____ _____?" _____ _____ _____ _____. _____ _____, "_____ _____ _____?" _____ _____ "_____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____. _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____." _____ _____ _____ "_____, _____ _____" _____ _____ _____.

_____ _____ _____, _____ _____ _____ _____. _____ "_____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____. _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____." "_____, _____ _____ _____," _____ _____," "_____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____."

Conversation activity:
'Controversy cards' create debate

This is an activity that has been very popular with our readers. It gets your students talking and voicing opinions on adult topics, but in an easy, low-stress environment. Students at all levels can participate. The speaking activity can easily morph into a writing exercise and this provides reinforcement as well as further opportunities for expression and interaction.

Preparation

Choose some topics that you think will engage the students. We've provided 12 statements on the next page for them to agree or disagree with; you can also write your own. Photocopy a set of the cards for each group of 3 or 4 students. Cut these apart and clip them together. Bring a timer and a bell or noise-maker of some kind (even a radio will do) to signal when it's time to change topics.

Step one—talk about it

Have the students sit close together in groups of 3 or 4. Tell them to draw one of the cards. They will see a sentence, and they will have 60 seconds to talk about this sentence. They must each tell the group whether they agree or disagree with it. You can model this for them, first, by writing a statement on the board such as "Soccer is a better sport than baseball" and asking students to respond by saying "I agree/disagree with this statement."

Ater 60 seconds, they will hear a signal. Now they must draw a **new** topic, and they will have one minute to talk about this. Repeat this 6 or 7 times, or do the entire set if you think the students want to continue that long.

In our experience, the students will join eagerly into discussing these cards. You can circulate around the room to explain any words they don't understand, but try not to get involved in the discussions at this point so as not to inhibit anyone. If the students are really engaged in talking, sometimes we 'cheat' and let the time run longer than one minute before signalling for the next card.

Step two—some short writing

Once the discussions are finished, have each student select one of the topics to write about. Give them a fixed length of time to write (say, 15 minutes), and ask them to begin with "I agree because..." or "I disagree because..." If some students finish quickly they might like to choose a second topic to write about.

Paper dialog

Make sure the students all sign their papers. Next, collect the papers and hand them out randomly, one to each student, making sure no one gets their own paper. Now, ask the students to read the paper they got, then respond to it in writing with "I agree with you because..." or "I disagree with you because..." When students finish writing their response, they should give the paper back to the original author, who can then make another written response, if there's enough time.

You will need to assist the students in reading each other's writing or in understanding what the other student wrote. However, you can also encourage them to ask for clarification in their responses if the idea is not clear.

This written dialog is often very interesting. It can give the students a strong sense of each other's point of view, and a real feeling of interaction with one another. If the students want to, they can continue writing back and forth over the next few days.

Follow up

It might be interesting to have each student summarize orally for the class what their written argument was about. Or, pass these around so other students can read them.

As a group, a nice activity would be to pick one or two topics and see how many arguments, pro and con, you can come up with and list these on the board. Then you could vote on which is the most convincing case.

Why it works

Everyone loves giving their opinion about things! This activity provides a structured format so that students get some practice in voicing their opinions appropriately and confidently.

Current events topics

If you wish, you can select some issues in the news for the students to discuss. Here are some examples:

- *The US should leave Iraq.*
- *North Korea is the most dangerous country in the world.*
- *The US President's term should be 6 years instead of 4.*
- *The US should stop immigration.*
- *Puerto Rico should become a state.*
- *The United Nations is not important any more.*
- *There should be no fishing worldwide for 10 years.*

Want more topics?

We published this same activity with different topic cards in Vol. 1, No. 2 and in Vol. 8, No. 2 of Hands-on English.

Controversy cards

There is too much sex on TV.	The speed limit should be only 55 mph on highways.
English is more difficult to learn than other languages.	College education should be free.
It's good for teenagers to get a job.	The death penalty should be abolished.
You shouldn't use a cell phone while driving.	It's dangerous to use credit cards.
Handguns should be illegal.	Some day astronauts will travel to Mars.
Men have an easier life than women.	It's easy to lose weight.

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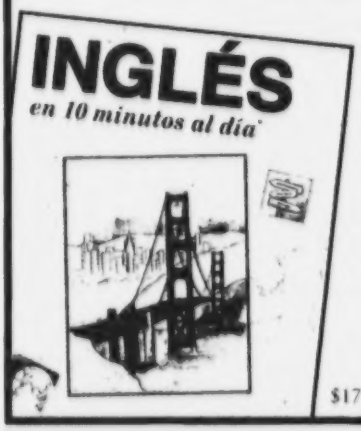

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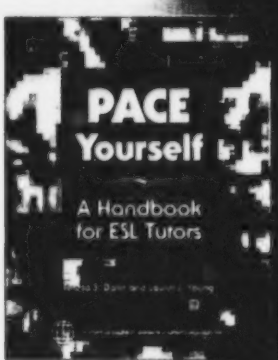

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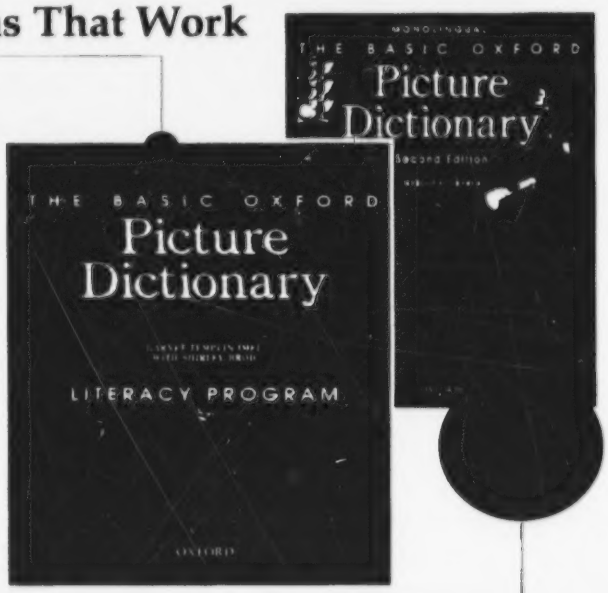

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News & notes

From past issues

We've brought you a number of activities about the process of studying and learning English, similar to the puzzle on **Speaking English** in this issue. See Vol. 7, No. 1 for the puzzle **About reading**; Vol. 12, No.3 for the puzzle **About writing**; Vol. 5, No. 5 for a slightly harder puzzle on **Language learning**; and Vol. 12, No. 6 for a slightly easier puzzle on **Learning English**. All of these are multi-level crosswords.

A reading and multi-level dictation, **How to learn English** (Vol. 9, No. 3) provides students with an opportunity to discuss useful learning strategies. Many readers told us their students enjoyed this lesson. Finally, some of our past conversation activities give students practice with language learning skills, such as **Can you repeat that, please?** in Vol. 12, No. 5.

If you are looking for seasonal topics, try **Football season**, a multi-level dictation in Vol. 11, No. 3 about the popular American pastime of watching football. And perfect for a Halloween lesson is **Stories with sounds**, a technique described in Vol. 12, No. 3.

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